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ABSTRACT

This book presents a process and framework designed to improve the chances that administrators will learn within the context of leading. It shows administrators how to use portfolios to develop their philosophy and leadership, zero in on goals, create plans and participate in professional development, coach peers, and assess and articulate what they have learned. The book offers examples, graphics, tools, logs, and registries to help administrators develop their own portfolios. There are six chapters focusing on: (1) "The Role of the Portfolio in Improving School Leader Performance" (e.g., the portfolio process and assembling the portfolio); (2) "Establishing a Purpose for the School Leader's Portfolio" (e.g., defining the purpose and defining one's own philosophy); (3) "Focusing the Portfolio" (e.g., determining goals and involving school staff); (4) "The Process of Collaboration and Professional Development" (e.g., creating a learning plan and identifying areas for learning); (5) "Portfolio Outcomes for Continuous Improvement" (e.g., leaders as learners and unexpected outcomes of the portfolio process); and (6) "Technology and the Portfolio Process" (employing electronic support). Four appendixes focus on: the portfolio process, steps in the portfolio process, blacklines of portfolio tools, and sample completed portfolio tools. (Contains 34 references.) (SM)

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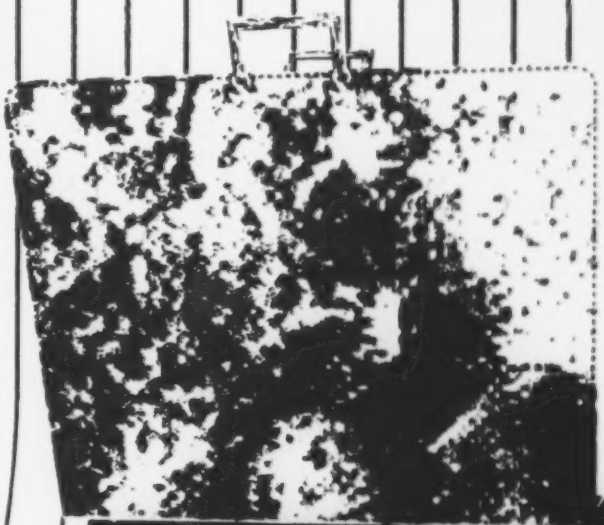
Designing the School Leader's Portfolio



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Mary E. Dietz

Foreword by Linda Lambert

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Mary E. Dietz

Foreword by Linda Lambert

Arlington Heights, Illinois

Designing the School Leader's Portfolio

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There are

one-story intellects,

two-story intellects, and

three-story intellects with skylights.

All fact collectors, who have no aim beyond their facts, are

one-story minds.

Two-story minds

compare, reason, generalize,

using the labors of the fact collectors

as well as their own.

Three-story minds

idealize, imagine, predict—their best illumination comes from above,

through the skylight.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to all the leaders who have served as teachers to me in my lifetime. They have given me insights and courage to risk and grow while at the same time encouraging others to incorporate learning as an essential element of their work.

—M.E.D.

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Foreword

How do leaders learn? Our profession has thought deeply about teacher learning. Beyond preparation, we support new teachers, pursue reflective practice, engage in instructional supervision and coaching, design professional development. Indeed, thinking about teacher learning is one of our major preoccupations. This is as it should be.

However, we have not given the same attention to a formal leader's learning. Beyond preparation, the professional development of administrators is haphazard, scant, random, and dependent on the flourishing of such endeavors as leadership academies or institutes. Learning that is systematically embedded in practice is elusive for most formal leaders. Those who are naturally thoughtful carve out their own learning plans and strategies; those who are less thoughtful or view leadership as reactionary rarely engage in systematic learning.

Is there something about the nature of leadership or of the job itself that warrants such neglect? Have leaders already learned what there is to learn? Hardly. In this book, Mary Dietz offers us a synthesis of current notions of leadership that helps us to understand that this work requires wisdom, compelling ideas, explicit values and vision, and the shared construction of meaning. Leading is moral work involving "the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization by operating in service of those around us" (Block 1993). Intriguingly, Dietz translates this transformative work into standards that draw out the skills and understandings of leadership. This discussion sets the stage for the real work to come.

In *Designing the School Leader's Portfolio*, Dietz has created a process and a framework that significantly improve the chances that administrators will learn within the context of leading. Such learning requires that district, school, and personal/professional goals and aims converge. Further, alignment among processes for assessing children, teachers, and administrators comes together for the first time. This convergence, or intersection, enables leaders to make sense of their work and find authenticity in shared purpose. This participatory process is a vehicle for the systemic design of an engaging, portfolio development journey—for *portfolio* is a verb more than it is a noun.

SkyLight Professional Development

Four phases of the portfolio design frame a comprehensive learning process:

Purpose, creating clarity about philosophy and leadership

Focus, zeroing in on goals and a banner question

Process, creating plans, gathering artifacts and evidence, participating in professional development activities and roundtable discussions

Outcomes, assessing and articulating what is learned.

The banner question is a particularly noteworthy concept. It is an essential or focusing question that frames the context for learning. Such a question provides an entry point into the inquiry process, often bubbling into other questions that lead to surprises and new understandings. Collaboration is thoughtful work with portfolio partners (peer coaches) and teams in a roundtable format.

If the portfolio process were presented as a singular journey, it would not be in step with current and persistent thinking that leadership is a shared endeavor. Because of the highly participatory nature of this process, it tends to build learning communities of educational leaders. Leaders experience themselves as learners, collaborators, and facilitators of community learning. This learning container ensures that the best that we know about professional learning takes place: reflection, inquiry, dialogue, and action.

This book is replete with examples, graphics, tools, logs, registries, and questions that bring the text to life. It is highly useable. This book can guide those who have responsibility for the preparation and professional development of school leaders. It can stand on its own.

Mary Dietz has created

- a pioneering effort in the field of leading and learning,
- a comprehensive system that incorporates state of the art assessment endeavors, and
- a learning process.

Congratulations are in order for work well done and skillfully applied in the field through her experiences in districts large and small, urban and suburban.

All leaders learn (just like children). As Dietz points out, "The portfolio provides an envelope for the mind that gives both framework and process to the learner." This work builds a rapprochement between *leader* and *learner* that takes us beyond our current experience.

Linda Lambert
Professor Emeritus
Department of Educational Leadership
California State University, Hayward

Preface

I depend on my own professional learning communities for reflection, collaboration, and filling in the blind spot in my thinking. Learning communities give me perspectives I have not yet accessed and pose challenging questions as to why, what, and how I am growing with my work. Most important, learning communities lead me to resources for expanding, deepening, and restructuring my understandings of the work of educators and the purpose of education in the Information Age. Without the combination of experiences from my various learning communities, I would never have matured in my understandings with the combination of conviction, confidence, and verve for my work. This combination of evolving knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes regarding work is developed and enhanced through the reflective collaborations with colleagues.

Creating the leadership portfolio is not just another activity; rather, it is an opportunity to advance goals, develop action plans, and provide evidence and outcomes in the context of a professional learning community.

When I first began to work with school systems in designing and implementing a leadership portfolio process, I faced great resistance. The overall response was, "We are too busy doing our work. We do not have time to DO a portfolio." Administrators were so distracted with the demands of mandates, legal challenges, test scores, and the ongoing list of day-to-day demands, not to mention the school board and community's vigilant watching, they could not take the time to make what they perceived was a *scrapbook*. However, some clusters of administrators I worked with truly tried to find the time, space, and energy to participate. They found themselves in the minority and eventually wanted to join the club of "I don't have the time." I was concerned, frustrated, but still eager to explore the possibilities of helping them clearly define their purpose for the portfolio and then design a process that would facilitate the process as a community of learners.

That was it! All of a sudden it dawned on me that while the portfolio might have been perceived as busywork, the notion of leaders taking the time for their own learning and development was just not a norm in their system. I thought of my own journey as an educational leader and the role

of learning in my work as well as how I was fitting it in my professional life. Then the pieces started coming together.

First, if learning is essential for continuous improvement in education, then leaders must be learners. Second, the leadership role is so burdened with tactical and strategic planning and action that time for learning, reflection, and collaboration is sorely overlooked. Last, but not least, the practice of a professional community working and learning together is a missing link. By design, there are more competitive cultural norms than collaborative norms for educational leaders. However, if the portfolio process had proved to be so successful for teacher development and as a vehicle for building capacity in schools, could that portfolio process be redesigned to offer similar enhancements to the work of administrators?

These reflections led to development of a portfolio design and process to assist the work of educational leaders. The portfolio process

- builds a professional learning community,
- creates the space for reflections and collaboration, and
- accomplishes this in the context of goal setting and achievement toward meeting professional, site, and districtwide goals.

The portfolio has become a vehicle to move through the goal-oriented, tactical, and strategic work of educational leaders while it has built capacity in new areas, solidified learning from experiences, and built a professional community with collaboration and support for success.

Educational leaders are eager to have such a learning community in which to learn and grow. Currently, many school systems do not provide the opportunities for administrative professional growth. Using the portfolio process as an entry point for responding to this critical need, the work of leadership and the power of collaboration, reflection, and learning have led to systemic changes in school systems. The portfolio process, once designed, implemented, and nurtured, provides a change that continues to add value to educational systems.

Acknowledgments

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the school communities that have contributed learnings that are reflected in the leadership portfolio design and process: the New York City Teacher Centers Consortium; the Acalanes High School District, Pleasant Hill, California; and the Saratoga Union School District, Saratoga, California. Through our shared experiences, we defined and refined the role of the portfolio in assessing and building capacity for school leaders to facilitate an environment that has an impact on student learning.

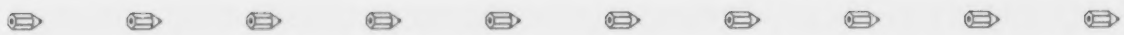
My early work in the Shoreham-Wading River (New York) School District served to build a foundation for my professional learning community that is still vital today.

I would also like to acknowledge Linda Lambert for writing the foreword and Bonnie Keast for assisting with the manuscript refining process.

Among the most influential mentors in my life has been my husband, Tom, who offers guidance, feedback, suggestions, and encouragement. His constant encouragement and cheerleading have been an inspiration.

—Mary E. Dietz

Introduction



WHAT IS THE SCHOOL LEADER'S PORTFOLIO?

The school leader's portfolio provides a framework for initiating, planning, and facilitating ongoing professional growth while connecting the purpose and focus of the school leader, the school, and the school community at-large. It is an organizer for reflection and learning as well as a design and a process to help school leaders sustain continuous professional improvement. The portfolio process focuses and integrates goal setting, school plans, and professional learning for the educational leader. In addition, the portfolio contributes to building learning communities and encourages peer collaborations in school systems where it is used as part of an alternative evaluation system or as a tool for professional development. *Designing the School Leader's Portfolio* coaches, or facilitates, the process to optimize learning and collaboration on the part of the school leader.

WHO NEEDS THE PORTFOLIO?

The portfolio process is designed for any person with a leadership position in a school system, including principals and school and district administrators. Some school systems use the portfolio as part of the administrator assessment and credentialing process; others invite school leaders to use the portfolio for individual and group planning and learning; and some school leaders use the process to plan, collaborate, and self-assess. Any combination of these purposes fits with the portfolio design, but it is important for school leaders to clarify the purpose and function of the portfolio at the beginning of the process.

The first reaction of most school leaders to the suggestion that they keep a portfolio is, "I don't have time to fit one more task into my schedule." But participating in the portfolio process this book describes is not an additional task—it is an activity that informs and focuses all the school leader's tasks, making the school leader more efficient in all that he or she does.

The time commitment is minimal—frequent informal meetings with a portfolio partner over coffee, breakfast, or lunch, and a monthly

roundtable session of one to two hours. In between, the process demands only reflection, focused thinking, and data collection. The portfolio process actually reduces the time school leaders spend making decisions or carrying out school plans.

Designing the School Leader's Portfolio provides tools to assist school leaders in putting their portfolios together. The tools guide their reflection and group discussion. Portfolio participants do not work alone. They share the process with a portfolio partner and a roundtable group—peer coaches who aid in every step of the process by offering feedback, ideas, and their own experience.

Educators around the globe have used this portfolio design to organize, focus, and facilitate their professional work and learning. To date, the portfolio process has been studied and documented in at least eleven doctoral dissertations. The process continues to evolve as educators contribute their ideas and successes and modify and enhance each phase.

BENEFITS OF THE PORTFOLIO

Traditionally, the focus of a portfolio is self-assessment, a record of professional development, or a record of accomplishments for future employment. The school leader's portfolio combines aspects of the learning portfolio and the assessment portfolio and as such it builds one's capacity for leadership.

Like a learning portfolio, this portfolio provides a location for school leaders to organize thoughts and reflections on learning and describe learning outcomes, and, like an assessment portfolio, the school leader's portfolio contains artifacts and evidence that fulfill prescribed district or state competencies, standards, or school or student outcomes.

In addition to providing a container to organize materials related to formal district assessment as well as self-assessment, the portfolio offers many other benefits. The very process of assembling the portfolio focuses the school leader's goals and objectives. In addition, the portfolio tracks improvement of leadership qualities and encourages peer discussion and evaluation as well as collaborative learning.

CREATING THE PORTFOLIO—THE STEPS OF THE PROCESS

Designing the School Leader's Portfolio takes readers through the four interdependent phases of the portfolio process:

- **Purpose** for work—establish purpose for portfolio
- **Focus** for learning—focus the portfolio and set professional, schoolwide, and districtwide goals

- **Process** for collaboration—engage in learning activities and collaborate with peers
- **Outcomes** for improvement—assess outcomes

This book supports recommendations with examples and real-life situations of how the portfolio can make the school leader more effective and a colearner with students and colleagues. It offers a step-by-step process for facilitating and focusing learning.

DEFINING AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADER

The portfolio can help clarify the school leader's goals, strengths, and weaknesses and contribute to his or her effective leadership. But what qualities make an effective leader?

Leaders in an educational system must have the ability to zoom in and zoom out; that is, leaders must be able to step back and look at the big picture to determine the impact of decisions, mandates, or innovations. Then they must have the ability to shift their focus to the details and again step back to view the big picture. For example, deciding whether to move to a block schedule requires consideration of the following: How do block schedules impact instructional time? Are transportation and other services flexible enough to accommodate the change? Does the change have the support of teachers, parents, community members, and curriculum designers? Most important, what are the benefits of this effort?

It is up to the administrator to coordinate and prioritize all activities and allocate resources in response to student needs, mandates, and community priorities. Administrators must build capacity and commitment among staff members to increase student success. According to Linda Lambert (1998), conditions for building that capacity follow:

1. Hire personnel with the proved capacity to do leadership work, and develop veteran staff to become skillful leaders.
2. Get to know one another to build trusting relationships.
3. Assess staff and school capacity for leadership: Do staff members have a shared purpose? Do they work collaboratively? Is there a schoolwide focus on student achievement?
4. Develop a culture of inquiry that includes a continuous cycle of reflecting, questioning, gathering evidence, and planning for improvements.
5. Organize for leadership work by establishing inclusive governance structures and collaborative inquiry processes.
6. Implement plans for building leadership capacity, and anticipate role changes and professional development needs.
7. Develop district policies and practices that support leadership capacity building. The district should model the processes of a learning organization.

Defining Leadership: Voices of Wisdom

Before beginning their process of defining standards for and attributes and expectations of educational leaders, members of one group of educational leaders explored leadership definitions. They looked to the following voices of wisdom, who describe their values and purpose as leaders and discuss constructing a learning organization (an environment where one learns and improves continually through experiences and new information), building a sense of community, and recognizing the school as an evolving system.

Cile Chavez, a past superintendent, states, "My role isn't so much to make things happen but to make sense of things, to show how things fit together" (1992). To her, a leader is less about doing than being. Her messages of meaning encourage others to seek focus and mission in their work. Sharing this search gives purpose and direction to the school as a system with its members all working together toward common, shared goals.

Thomas Sergiovanni (1993) speaks of redefining leadership. The essence of the revised definition is the importance of the concepts, values, and ideals one brings to the practice of leadership. While management skills and competence remain important and help smooth the way, leaders must rely less on their people-handling skills and more on offering compelling ideas in the form of a mission and purpose others can share. The two banners of *mission* and *purpose* leading the way position the school to be more agile in responding to continual change in student needs and the effects the changing needs have on the school as a system.

Chavez and Sergiovanni highlight the necessity of leaders to align who they are with what they do. Their words invite leaders to focus on their higher purpose of leader as observer, engineer, composer, and facilitator rather than merely manager. Leaders set purpose, focus goals and outcomes, and establish feedback loops to monitor progress and continual learning for improvements. Chavez and Sergiovanni stress the need to build commitment in the school community rather than monitor compliance. In today's work environment, compliance will not help educators meet the demands of the Information Age and lifelong learning. The revised model of leadership emphasizes the leader's role of facilitating and organizing the work of the system with all participants contributing to the shared purpose, mission, and vision rather than merely complying with a manager's ideas. Leadership is more than managing the tasks at hand; it is focusing participants and building their capacity to improve continually. A leader's philosophy, purpose, values, and beliefs are at the forefront of his or her work. The portfolio process gives leaders the opportunity to construct their philosophy and purpose.

Another voice of wisdom, Arnold Packer (1992) sees the school as a system serving the community as well as serving the future employment needs of the community. He stresses the importance of shared purpose and agreement of focus as an essential element to enable a school system to

move forward. Because it helps school leaders align their goals with schoolwide and districtwide plans, the portfolio process integrates and focuses the goals and shared purpose of educational leaders with that of their system.

The essential element of shared purpose is a foundation for community, with all members sharing in the responsibility to achieve results. The reciprocal processes of constructivist leadership enable participants in an educational community to construct meanings that lead toward a common purpose about schooling (Lambert, Collay, and Dietz 1995).

Packer also highlights the necessity of shared purpose (1992). The portfolio process begins with school leaders defining their purpose and philosophy in an effort to build a foundation for the goal setting and learning that will follow. In addition, the portfolio is structured around goals, outcomes, and a process for interpreting data related to student learning, connecting the leaders' school plan with district goals and their own professional development.

Peter Senge (1990) has identified a critical element of a learning organization: "The development of collective meaning is an essential characteristic of a learning organization" (241). He states further that

> [t]he leader's new work for the future is building learning organizations. This new view of leadership in learning organizations centers on subtler and more important tasks. In a learning organization, leaders are designers, stewards, and teachers. They are responsible for building organizations where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision, and improve shared mental models—that is, they are responsible for learning (340).

According to Senge, many of the best-intentioned efforts to foster new learning disciplines flounder because those leading the charge forget the first rule of learning: people learn when they need to learn, not when someone else thinks they need to learn.

In *Renewing America's Schools*, Carl Glickman (1993) discusses the need for disequilibrum in a school system. When learners experience disequilibrium, the unrest that occurs when they face a situation or information that does not make sense to them, they attempt to accommodate the new ideas or situation by calling on past experiences and interactions with people, objects, and ideas to build new understandings. The unrest in a school system that occurs on examination of student learning data leads educational leaders to ask questions such as "Why are we getting these results?" and "What should our focus and goals be to impact a change in outcomes?" Without disequilibrium, learning and improvement do not occur. One would never ask questions such as "Why is this happening?" and "How can I influence change?" Glickman offers the following example of how wisdom and the notion of a learning organization serve educational leaders in moving forward and seeking new results.

> Success is the intelligent use of mistakes in self-renewing schools. The moral imperative of the school is for its members to move into their areas of incompetence: if we already know exactly how to do this work, we should not have the purposeless cycles of educational reform that schools are endlessly caught in. We all need to learn new roles and relationships (91).

The portfolio process encourages reflection on and examination of data as evidence of what works and what does not work to improve student learning.

Michael Fullan (1991) stresses the challenge of decision making in regard to school change initiatives: "The greatest problem faced by school districts and schools is not resistance to innovation, but the fragmentation, overload, and incoherence resulting from the uncritical and uncoordinated acceptance of too many different innovations. Changes abound in the schools of today. The role of the district is to help schools sort out and implement the right choices" (197). Through the portfolio process, educational leaders examine their process in new ways.

Peter Block (1993) stresses the need for letting go of the need to control through structures by challenging leaders to look at the key element for change. He states, "If there is no transformation inside of us, all the structural change in the world will have no impact on our institution" (44). Block promotes stewardship, which he defines as the willingness to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization by operating in service of others rather than controlling them. Because stewardship requires leaders to choose service over self-interest, it requires a level of trust most leaders are not used to holding. Stewardship requires that leaders be accountable for the outcomes of the institution without acting to define purpose for others, control others, or take care of others. The portfolio process is designed to support and facilitate collaboration and, thus, build a learning community among the school leadership and, in turn, throughout the school community. Having a portfolio partner and participating in portfolio roundtable discussions contribute to building and sustaining a learning community.

Margaret Wheatley (1992) challenges leaders to adapt, to be active learners facilitating a learning community:

> I believe that we have only just begun the process of discovering and inventing the new organizational formula that will inhabit the twenty-first century. To be responsible inventors and discoverers, though, we need the courage to let go of the old world, to relinquish most of what we cherished, to abandon our interpretations about what does and doesn't work. As Einstein is often quoted as saying: 'No problem can be solved from the same consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew' (5).

The portfolio process invites and encourages building learning communities by providing leaders collaborative structures and processes through which they support each other's efforts to become more adaptable. The

section that follows provides a review of the background and theoretical underpinnings that drive current understanding of the school as a system and the leader's role and function in that system.

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

As we move through the next century and consider the challenges facing school systems, it's important to consider the role of leadership in guiding school communities in their mission of education. How will leaders grow professionally in their demanding and ever-changing role? Participation in a leadership portfolio process that aligns goals and enhances collaboration contributes strongly to preparing leaders for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

If learning communities are to be vehicles for processing and responding to the accelerated rate of change in the Information Age, how will leaders build the capacity and commitment for responding to change? The portfolio offers both a structure and a process for building learning communities among educational leaders. Participation in the portfolio process allows leaders to model and experience three of their critical roles: leader as learner, leader as collaborator, and leader as facilitator of learning communities.

The terms *learning organization* and *learning communities* are used with increasing frequency in educational systems. The emergence of learning in an organizational sense is the realization that change has become the norm. Educational systems no longer implement a program, evaluate it for three years, then consider next steps. The pace has been accelerated to the point where constant change is the norm. Educational leaders seek models to assist them in finding and maintaining the balance between the chaos of rapid change and order.

Key Elements of Organizing School Systems

In *Leadership and the New Science*, Margaret Wheatley combines the concepts of learning communities and evolving systems (1992). Her work with systems cites four key elements involved in organizing and focusing growing school systems: chaos, information, relationships, and vision/purpose. Wheatley compares mechanical systems, such as a car, with living systems, such as an ocean or lake. In mechanical systems, outside forces both break down and repair the system. A mechanical system has limited potential; living systems, on the other hand, have the potential to revive, to grow, to evolve. They are sensitive to environmental changes, such as lack of nourishment, and vulnerable to dysfunction, such as the addition of toxic waste.

In school systems, many environmental changes impact the work; yet, they are outside the system's scope of control. For example, a change in funding, community priorities, or state or federal agency demands can affect the function of the system. These changes require adjustments within the system, but they are not under the immediate control of the system. Balance within the system is necessary to sustain efforts and commitments and respond effectively to the mandates, demands, and changes.

Chaos

Wheatley also offers guidelines for thriving in a world of change and chaos. Chaos is often caused by the rapid rate of change in a living system. Chaos is a process by which natural systems, including organizations, renew and revitalize themselves. Accepting chaos is essential. Just as disequilibrium is essential to promote learning, so is chaos an essential part of the learning organization. It is through the chaos of new mandates, competing needs, and constant changes that the organization continually seeks to clarify, focus, and understand as it attempts to respond appropriately.

As people move through the process of chaos, new levels of understanding emerge and the system finds a new equilibrium. Systems have the potential to self-organize and reorganize to adapt to environmental changes. Leaders need to embrace that tension between order and chaos in the evolving system and accept it as an essential part of the process of system growth!

Resistance is usually the initial response to change. First, there is doubt the change will really occur; then when it does occur, there is uncertainty about whether the new way can be a success. Self-esteem falters as staff members become concerned about potential changes in job titles and responsibilities. Individuals who can move out of this initial resistance are open to the flow of new information and can search for understanding and thus accommodate the chaos. This reaction actually causes more chaos, but it is through this continual process that the system reorganizes itself and moves to a new sense of order. In response to a need or mandate, the system is renewed as it incorporates new practices and programs.

Information

Successful living systems must have information (Wheatley 1992). Sharing information is an essential organizing force in any organization because information guides and drives decisions. The more members of the system share the information, the better the chance of having new understandings systemwide. Test score data, new standards, research pertaining to learning, and strategies for meeting individual student needs are examples of shared information. This information informs the continually evolving system.

A major challenge is to refine and combine the new ideas without overburdening the system. In other words, letting go of old ways as new ideas

and information are included refines the work rather than simply adding more pieces.

Information both forms and informs the system. For information to flow in the organization, trusting relationships, a shared purpose, and clear understanding of each person's intention must exist. The integration of old and new ways requires a willingness to let go of the attitude that states, "This is the way we always do things around here!" By establishing norms for the continuous flow of information within the organization, the leader ensures an environment that recognizes information as an essential element for vitality.

Relationships

The third essential attribute in a living system, according to Wheatley (1992), is relationships. A rich diversity of relationships is needed to energize teams. Relationships are the core of the system. If relationships work, the work goes well; if relationships do not work, the work does not go well. One of the most essential roles a leader plays is creating an environment where trusting professional relationships grow and are nurtured. Conversing about shared purposes, studying together, and learning and problem solving together form the glue that sustains a learning community. Professional relationships provide a bond that sustains focus in the system during times of chaos. The more supportive the relationships, the greater the richness and diversity of ideas and understandings and the greater the commitment to a shared purpose.

Vision and Purpose

The last essential attribute of a healthy system is vision and shared purpose (Wheatley 1992). Leaders must embrace vision as the invisible field that can enable the organization to re-create the workplace and the world. Although vision pulls the whole organization forward, it is not a final destination. The field of vision forms and reforms as the school moves toward a shared purpose and goal. A good starting point is defining the organization's shared purpose and building actions to move forward. Moving forward means understanding, checking in with members of the system, and assessing the success indicators, then continually refining the process. It is the leader's task to create a sense of stability in the unstable environment and to orient others in the system where knowledge is temporary and change is the norm.

Shared purpose and continual improvements are also reflected in Senge's definition of learning communities. He defines learning communities as

> groups of individuals who have come together with a shared purpose and agree to construct new understandings . . . a place where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is

> set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together (1990, 241).

An understanding of organizational learning communities and how systems evolve helps leaders establish their own focus and role in the school system. Leaders are primarily responsible for

- managing the balance between order and chaos;
- establishing shared purpose, focus, and goals;
- building and sustaining learning communities with trusting professional relationships;
- sustaining a level of high standards and expectations for all members of the learning community; and
- facilitating the process of information flow throughout the system.

The leadership portfolio process assists educational leaders in building professional learning communities. The process gives them an opportunity to practice "systems watching" as they seek to recognize and develop a capacity to include Wheatley's four essential attributes of an evolving system. Leaders model the process and establish a professional norm for the system. They set an expectation, by example, of ongoing professional learning, collaboration, and commitment to continual improvements. Thus, leaders advance the purpose and mission for education in the community while they respond to individual student needs and incorporate standards for excellence.

Figure 0.1 depicts the relationship between the systemwide change model and the portfolio process. The flow of information that forms and informs the system requires trusting relationships, a shared purpose, and clear goals. Through its phases of purpose, focus, process, and outcomes, the leadership portfolio sets the stage for each of the elements essential for change.

In the purpose phase, school leaders define the portfolio purpose in relation to their personal goals as well as district expectations; in other words, they determine a shared purpose. In the focus phase, leaders establish goals for the school, the students, and their own professional growth. In the process phase, leaders build the relationships so necessary to change as they establish a collaborative process and work with their peers to achieve the goals they have established. Finally, leaders use information they have accumulated to determine the outcomes of their efforts and set new goals for improvement.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Chapter 1, The Role of the Portfolio in Improving School Leader Performance, describes how the administrator's portfolio can help clarify goals, strengths, and weaknesses and help contribute to effective leadership.

Systemwide Change and the Leadership Portfolio

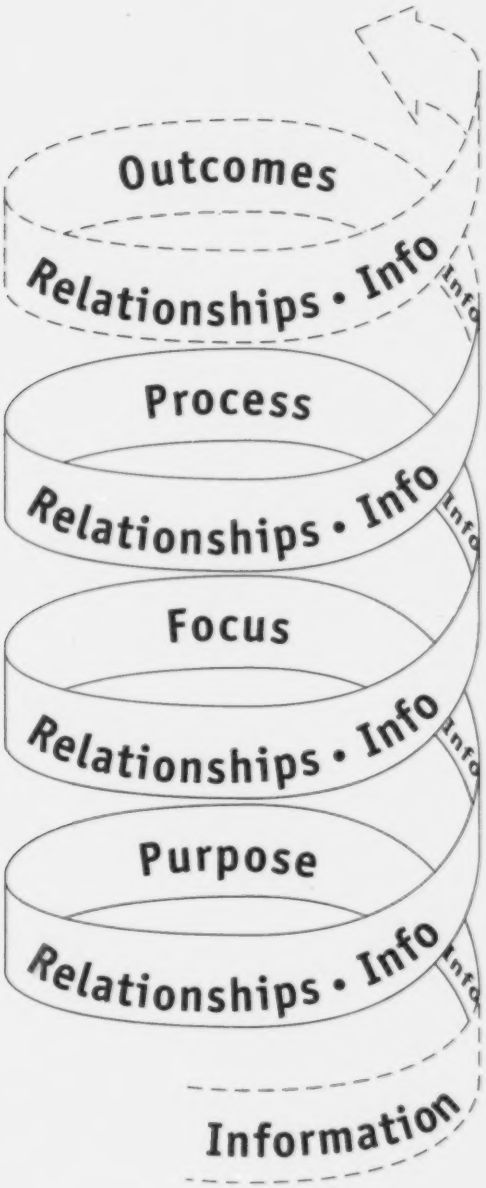


Figure 0.1

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Chapter 1 also describes the portfolio system of leadership assessment, which consists of three key activities:

- setting goals and establishing school plans,
- assessing student data to determine success of goals and plans, and
- participating in professional learning activities.

These critical activities are organized, focused, and examined through the reflective, collaborative process of the portfolio. The book includes the purpose, process, and tools for engaging in these activities. Chapter 1 introduces the four phases of the portfolio process and stresses the need to define leadership and the key attributes of school leaders.

Chapter 2, Establishing a Purpose for the School Leader's Portfolio, introduces the first of the four phases of the portfolio process: establishing a purpose for the portfolio and defining one's personal philosophy of education. Leaders use this chapter as a starting point for reaching agreement in defining the purpose and function of leadership in a school community.

Chapter 3 addresses the second phase of the process, focus. In Focusing the Portfolio, leaders find the tools to establish the goals and specific learning outcomes for the school, the students, and the leader. During the focus phase, leaders generate a banner question, an essential question that becomes their primary focus for learning and work for the year. This question provides the focus by guiding the selection of learning activities and collection of artifacts and evidence.

Once they have established a purpose and focus for the portfolio, leaders move to the collaboration phase. Chapter 4, The Process of Collaboration and Professional Development, describes this phase, in which leaders plan their learning activities, actions, and partnerships for reflection and professional collaboration. The chapter offers tools to assist in scheduling and facilitating roundtable discussions to share progress and learning within the portfolio process.

All the activities in the first three phases prepare school administrators for the final reflection and sharing of artifacts, evidence, and learning in the fourth phase, outcomes. Chapter 5, Portfolio Outcomes for Continuous Improvement, describes this phase and explains how leaders summarize their learning and plan their next steps.

Chapter 6, Technology and the Portfolio Process, contains a technology resource guide with suggestions for using technology to enhance and streamline the portfolio process.

The Appendices contain blackline (reproducible) copies of portfolio worksheets and tools. Copies of all the worksheets and tools appear throughout the text along with samples of worksheets and tools completed by school leaders who participated in the portfolio process.

CHAPTER 1

The Role of the Portfolio in Improving School Leader Performance

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

For the past several years, national organizations, state departments of education, and local school leadership groups have been developing standards for educational leaders to suit these changing and challenging times. Most school systems base assessment of administrators on three primary performance areas: the leader's goals and plans for the school, student performance outcomes, and the leader's professional skills and leadership qualities. Of course, the three areas overlap: leadership abilities together with the goals school leaders set for their schools are the foundation for improved student learning outcomes. The common thread joining all three assessment areas is professional development; professional learning enhances all three because improvement in one area leads to improvement in the other areas.

THE ROLE OF THE PORTFOLIO

The school leader's portfolio—a compilation of recorded goals and action plans, artifacts and evidence, and reflections on leadership—contributes to continuous professional growth because it provides evidence of a leader's effectiveness. The portfolio helps sustain personal and professional

improvement by offering a system that aligns leadership performance and learning with school and district goals. The portfolio process this book describes provides school leaders with a leadership assessment system (see Figure 1.1). As the means of organizing and streamlining assessment, the portfolio helps school leaders focus goals for student learning, determine tools for evaluating the outcome of student learning, focus professional priorities in the form of continuous professional learning, and collaborate and reflect on the effects of their work within the school system and personally.

Portfolio System of Leadership Assessment

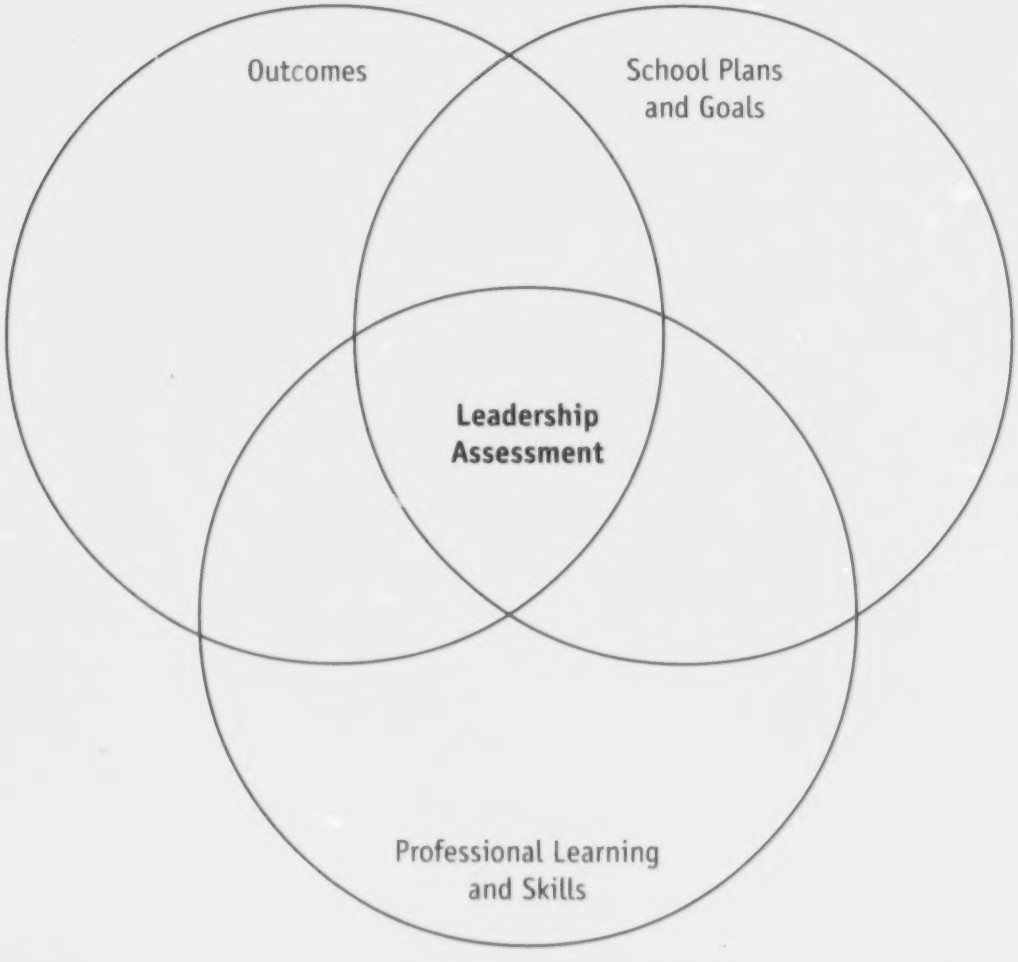

Figure 1.1

SkyLight Professional Development

The Portfolio System of Leadership Assessment

The portfolio system of leadership assessment integrates the critical elements of an administrator's performance: goals, outcomes, and learning. As Figure 1.1 depicts, these critical elements overlap. The administrator's goals and expectations for the year may be represented in a school or district plan, self-generated, or assigned by a supervisor. The goals, a plan to implement the goals, and determination of resources necessary to support and facilitate achievement of those goals provide a foundation for the collaboration—and learning—that is part of the portfolio process.

The second key element in the portfolio system of leadership assessment is outcomes. Outcomes are related to student learning, leadership learning, and systems learning and reform. Outcome data provide an opportunity to review classroom practices and teacher performance while assessing systemwide results. Student data indicate progress toward achieving goals and help determine future goals and range from test scores to attendance figures. The portfolio process enables leaders to put acquired student and school data into context and see how the data support their goals and match their desired outcomes. The data also link leadership to the core function of the school system—student learning. In addition to student data, other organizational outcome indicators might be used such as effects of a new standards-based curriculum or observations of innovative instructional practices.

The portfolio system of leadership assessment integrates the critical elements of an administrator's performance.

Outcome data inform a school leader of the level of effectiveness achieved and help identify areas that require additional focus, knowledge, and ability on the school leader's part. Because outcome data identify needs of both the school system and the school leader, the leadership assessment system that is part of the school leader's portfolio serves both the school system and the leader.

The third part of the portfolio system of leadership assessment is professional learning. As part of this critical element, school leaders identify specific professional development opportunities to advance their learning and leadership effectiveness. As it enables school leaders to focus on the purpose of their work, monitor their effectiveness, and seek feedback through professional collaborations, the portfolio process and its peer coaching element highlight the need for professional development and enhance professional development opportunities.

THE PORTFOLIO PROCESS

In the four-phase portfolio design, leaders journey through a process that begins with defining a shared purpose and philosophy, moves on to setting goals and focusing their own learning, continues by building a plan for action and collaboration, and culminates with an articulation of outcomes

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and identification of next steps. (See Figure 1.2 for a brief overview of the portfolio process. In addition, a blackline master of the phases, suitable for use as an overhead transparency, appears in Appendix A.)

Phases of the Portfolio Process

Purpose for Work

Describe professional philosophy and define leadership attributes and standards.

Focus for Learning

Focus the portfolio theme and set goals through creation of a banner question—an essential question that will drive inquiry and learning for the current year.

Process for Collaboration

Create learning plans, participate in professional development activities, collect artifacts and evidence, and meet with colleagues one-on-one and in roundtable group sessions.

Outcomes for Improvement

Reflect on progress, share learning, and set new goals.

Figure 1.2

Each step in the portfolio process facilitates school leaders in goal setting, learning, and reflection. The portfolio process includes defining the administrator's leadership role and identifying the skills and actions that promote the school community's achievement of its goals. Activities at each phase of the portfolio process guide school leaders in focusing and directing their inquiry as they collect artifacts and evidence of their learning and acquire new understanding through collegial collaborations. The collegial collaboration enables them to reflect on the effectiveness and impact of their leadership in improving the school culture.

The core function of a school system is to enhance and serve the student as learner. All actions and decisions should support student achievement. The portfolio process provides school leaders with guidance, collaboration, and checkpoints to serve the core function of the system. The process informs school leaders of areas for growth and learning in response to the school system's needs. Its focus on the purpose and goals for the school community results in improved learning outcomes for students.

Purpose for Work

Establishing the portfolio purpose involves declaring and refining one's philosophy and expectations for professional work. Establishing one's philosophy and purpose provides a basis for meaningful work. Putting it in writing reminds school leaders of their commitment and passion toward their work and why they entered this field. In the course of work each day, a majority of decisions school leaders make stem from their philosophy, beliefs, and commitment to their work. A clear understanding of their philosophy and purpose for their work, in turn, builds the foundation for decision making and gives them a yardstick to determine progress and a focus for collaboration and planning.

Also in this phase, portfolio participants determine the characteristics of an effective leader and establish the scope of leadership work in keeping with each leader's school system. This process helps leaders acquire a more profound wisdom and an enriched perspective about their work as educational leaders.

If the district requires the portfolio as a means of formal assessment of the school leaders, the district inserts its specific and unique assessment demands at the purpose-setting session. The portfolio provides a vehicle for the district to include its assessment demands in the portfolio process as a robust leadership assessment process.

Focus for Learning

In this phase, school leaders determine the focus of their portfolio and set their goals for the school and their own professional development. They establish an essential question, a banner question, to focus their goals and guide their learning and, subsequently, focus and guide their leadership work.

Ideally, school and district goals and the professional development goals of the educational leader align. The portfolio provides a structure and process for aligning the portfolio purpose and the school leader's goals with those of the district and school board. The structure is the organization of the portfolio, including the four-phase design and the tools and worksheets in each chapter that help educational leaders focus on what they want to accomplish, where they want to grow, and what goals they need to focus on. The process includes the "softer" tools: collaboration, peer coaching, discussion, and reflection.

The portfolio provides a structure and process for aligning the portfolio purpose and the school leader's goals with those of the district and school board.

The school board has specific goals and expectations for the district or school. As they set their portfolio plan, educational leaders need to look at the district goals and their own goals and clarify the alignment, or agreement, between their plan and what the school board directs them to do. The challenge is for leaders to have a personal philosophy and purpose that aligns with district goals. The leaders are accountable for districtwide goals,

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but because district goals are usually broadly written, school leaders have some latitude when planning the purpose and focus of their goals to meet those of the district.

Process for Collaboration

Participating in the portfolio process with peers heightens the learning experience because peers offer contributions, observations, and feedback. In most school systems that have implemented the portfolio process, school leaders meet in a roundtable discussion group several times during the year and meet informally more often with a portfolio partner.

Participating in the portfolio process with peers heightens the learning experience because peers offer contributions, observations, and feedback.

The portfolio partner is a peer of choice whom the leader meets with informally throughout the portfolio process to discuss specific portfolio activities and to consider other challenges and events that emerge during the course of work. The two leaders provide each other with coaching and support.

Meeting with a roundtable group is more structured and occurs four to six times during the year (the portfolio cycle). Lasting about an hour or more, these meetings are opportunities for participants—two to four sets of portfolio partners (four to eight participants)—to go around the table and review their portfolio progress and share challenges and next steps. These sessions are valuable because they expose the participants to a variety of viewpoints. Some school teams meet monthly; others meet every two weeks once they realize how valuable the process is in their daily work.

Meeting as a group allows portfolio participants the time and structure to discuss challenges, needs, and achievements. The most valuable—and powerful—benefit is the team effort and the emergence of ideas that might not have surfaced without the focused time together. Instead of meeting and talking about isolated events, the roundtable group focuses on specific targets, goals, and needs in the context of their portfolio purpose and goals, which allows for rich conversation, not just retelling of events and elaboration of concerns. The collaboration in this phase of the portfolio process also builds a professional community whose members all have the expectation of problem solving, learning, and improving one's work.

Also in this phase, school leaders participate in the professional development activities they identified in the focus phase, create their learning plans, and begin collecting artifacts and evidence of their progress toward meeting their professional and school goals.

Outcomes for Improvement

In this fourth phase of the portfolio process, school leaders assess the artifacts and evidence they have collected. In particular, they examine their progress toward achieving the goals of their school plan, improving school and student performance, and participating in professional development

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opportunities that contribute to their knowledge and effectiveness in their role as school leaders.

This is also a time for them to reflect on the portfolio process and share their reflection and their learning with their peers in a roundtable session. Based on their reflection and peer feedback, they make adjustments to their undertaking of the portfolio process, set new goals, and establish a new banner question.

THE BENEFITS OF THE PORTFOLIO

The portfolio provides a structure and process for reflection, collaboration, and learning. The multidimensional portfolio process allows for contextual learning and a variety of sources for feedback. The portfolio purpose and goals provide direction for the participant's reflection and learning. The purpose and goals create the arena and the topics for exploration and learning. Most important of all, portfolios have the potential to facilitate school leaders' learning, allowing them to focus and construct the meaning of their work and to measure their progress. The portfolio increases collaboration and learning, invites peer reflection and observation, and encourages community learning. It can be viewed as a container for the conversations, reflections, inquiry, and observations about work. Figure 1.3 and the text that follows articulate the learning opportunities the portfolio process promotes.

Benefits of the School Leader's Portfolio

The portfolio process provides opportunities for

- focusing professional and personal growth.
- creating and adapting personal learning plans.
- collecting artifacts and evidence of success.
- collaborating with peers one-on-one and in groups.
- sharpening management skills.
- applying leadership skills.
- drawing on past knowledge and experiences.
- observing and contributing to collegial development.
- assessing the impact and influence of the school district systems.
- reflecting on one's values, attitudes, and experiences.

Figure 1.3

- **Focusing professional and personal growth.** The portfolio process identifies a target area for learning. Leaders select an area of concern, an area of interest, or an area in which they need additional expertise and articulate it in the form of a banner question.
- **Creating and adapting personal learning plans.** The process helps leaders select activities that contribute to their learning (inquiry) process, provide a variety of experiences, and highlight interactions with individuals and ideas.
- **Collecting artifacts and evidence.** As part of the process, leaders gather items that represent growth and reflect new understandings in the context of the banner question.
- **Collaborating with peers one-on-one and in groups.** Leaders meet with a portfolio partner on an ongoing basis and in roundtable discussion groups with peers. Because groups may include colleagues with similar and different learning priorities, the opportunities for peer coaching and varied feedback are great.
- **Sharpening management skills.** Colleagues help each other identify management skills that get the job done. Leaders incorporate the skills into the banner question and, subsequently, into their professional development needs.
- **Applying leadership skills.** Portfolio participants identify characteristics of effective leaders and incorporate these characteristics into the banner question and professional development requirements.
- **Drawing on past knowledge and experiences.** When forming the banner question and creating learning plans, leaders consider prior learning and use it as a starting point for inquiry.
- **Observing and contributing to collegial development.** The portfolio process creates an environment where every leader is a learner. Through collaboration with peers, portfolio participants act as both learners and leaders.
- **Assessing the impact and influence of school district systems.** The process asks leaders to consider systems within the school and the district that support or interfere with outcomes related to the banner question.
- **Reflecting on values, attitudes, and experiences.** School leaders collaborate with peers, write in their journals, select artifacts and evidence, reflect on learning activities, and have frequent and varied opportunities to consider colleagues' and their own points of view.

While the portfolio process can play a role in a school system's assessment process, it also contributes to leaders' self-assessment. Collegial collaborations can lead participants to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses. This self-awareness produces a greater likelihood that they will engage in learning opportunities in an effort to grow. The feedback provided in a trusting and respectful environment of a portfolio roundtable

discussion or one-on-one meeting with a portfolio partner assists leaders in identifying areas that will improve their effectiveness.

IMPORTANCE OF LEADERS AS LEARNERS

No one can mandate leaders to be learners. However, the leadership community can make a conscious decision to build a professional learning community, thus shaping its work and design to meet a shared purpose.

Lifelong learning is a demand of the information era—knowledge is temporary and everyone must be able to adapt continually and learn at a pace outside one's comfort range. Educational leaders should experience and be able to model this ability as part of their leadership role in a school system. Lifelong learning is the ability to continually enhance, modify, and restructure one's understanding by interacting with other people, ideas, and situations. One restructures and builds new understanding through these experiences and interactions. These new understandings lead to new practices and models for learning and assessment within the school systems.

Lifelong learning is a demand of the information era.

The portfolio provides the structure and process for educational leaders to engage with colleagues as they continually restructure their understandings and to be part of a professional learning community. They are modeling the process for students and other community members as they build their professional learning community with their colleagues. Through reflections and continually incorporating new ideas into their professional practices, they actually establish the attributes of a learning organization. The portfolio provides an envelope for the mind that gives both framework and process to the learner.

Figure 1.4 depicts the school leader's movement through the phases of the portfolio process. In each phase, portfolio participants must ask themselves a series of questions related to their professional goals and the goals of the school community they serve. Each phase of the portfolio process builds on the previous phase, so as they progress through the process, leaders must take with them the knowledge and insight they acquired in the previous phase. After they have completed the final phase and assessed outcomes, they must set new goals for growth and learning.

ASSEMBLING THE PORTFOLIO

The portfolio can take any form participants wish—from a three-ring binder to a journal to a computer file. Accompanying the discussion of each phase of the process are worksheets and tools school leaders can photocopy and use as general organizers or journal entries. Leaders compile the information, artifacts, evidence, and other materials according to their preferences and needs, unless the district prescribes a specific compilation process and design for assessment purposes.

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Leadership Portfolio Process

Each phase of portfolio process builds on the previous phase.

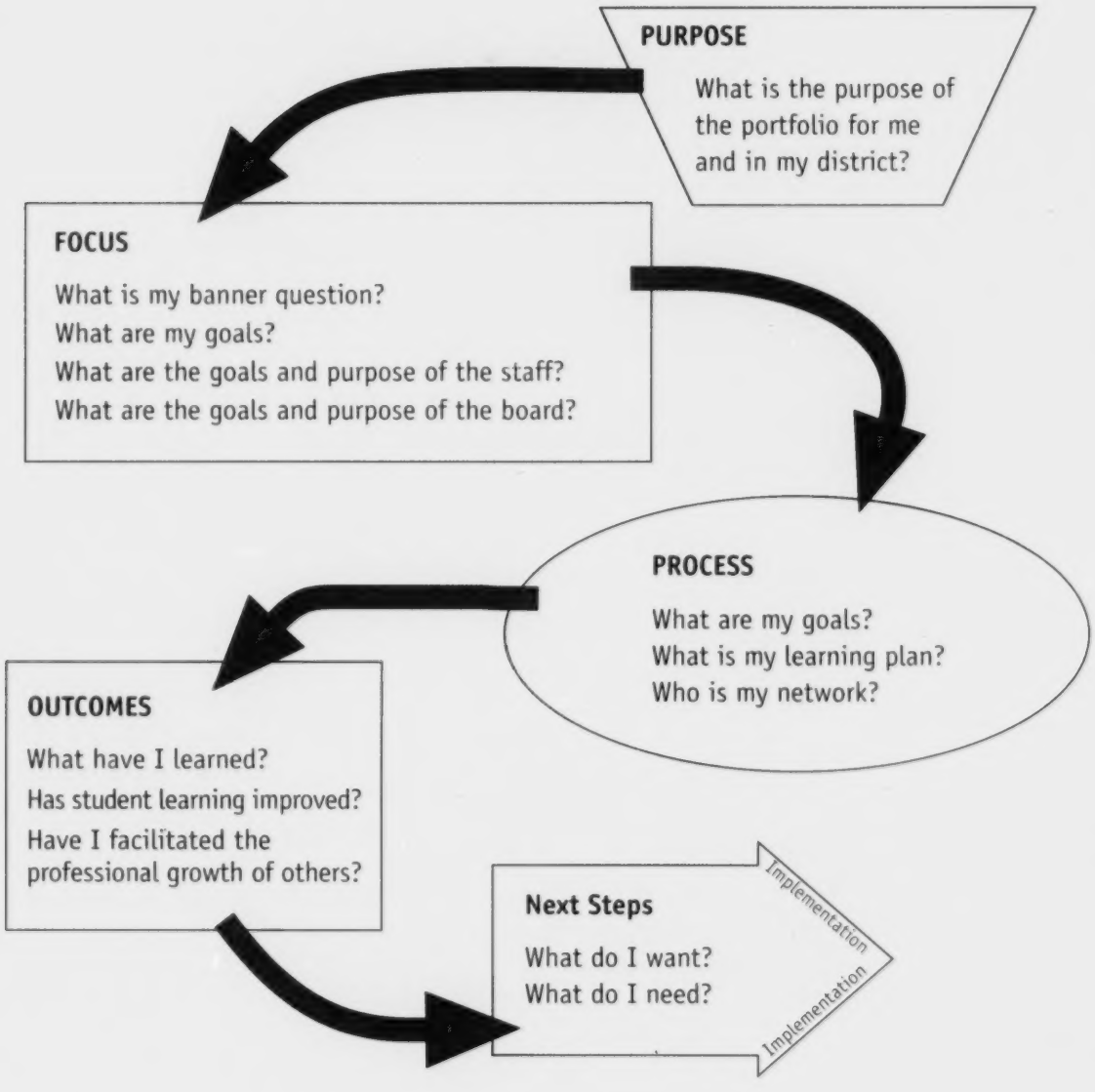
PURPOSE
What is the purpose of the portfolio for me and in my district?
FOCUS
What is my banner question?
What are my goals?
What are the goals and purpose of the staff?
What are the goals and purpose of the board?
PROCESS
What are my goals?
What is my learning plan?
Who is my network?
OUTCOMES
What have I learned?
Has student learning improved?
Have I facilitated the professional growth of others?
Next Steps
What do I want?
What do I need?
Implementation
Implementation

Figure 1.4

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CHAPTER 2

Establishing a Purpose for the School Leader's Portfolio

THE FIRST PHASE OF THE PORTFOLIO PROCESS

Establishing the purpose for the portfolio is the first of the four phases of the portfolio process. In this phase, portfolio participants begin building a professional community, define their professional philosophy, and determine a shared purpose for participating in the portfolio process. Participants also determine the role their portfolio will play in their work and within their school system.

Note that portfolio participants do not leave one phase behind when they enter the next. The process requires them to refer continually to the earlier phases, with each phase building on the previous phase. While they need to complete some activities in the process only once, others are ongoing throughout the process and throughout their professional careers. Figure 2.1 outlines the steps and the corresponding phase of the portfolio process. (A blackline master of Figure 2.1, suitable for use as an overhead transparency, appears in Appendix B.)

Steps in the Portfolio Process

The first three steps of the portfolio process mark the school leader's introduction to the process and set the stage for the remainder of the process. Steps four through seven define ongoing activities, which take place throughout the portfolio process.

Introduction to the Portfolio Process

Step 1: Participate in the initial purpose-setting session. (Phase One)

Step 2: Focus portfolio by identifying goals and establishing banner question. (Phase Two)

Step 3: Identify a portfolio partner and a collaboration network, and begin process of collaboration and activities. (Phase Three)

Ongoing Activities Within the Portfolio Process

Step 4: Set school/district and professional development goals, establish learning plans, and collect artifacts and evidence. (Phases Two, Three, and Four)

Step 5: Design a Professional Growth Plan. (Phase Three)

Step 6: Engage in roundtable sessions. (Phases One, Two, Three, and Four)

Step 7: Assess outcomes and determine effectiveness of the process; make adaptations as indicated. (Phase Four)

Figure 2.1

ESTABLISHING A PURPOSE FOR THE PORTFOLIO

The portfolio process starts with the community of leaders coming together to explore and define their purpose for engaging in the portfolio process. This community might be school leaders who have come together on their own or a group of administrators that has been convened by the school or district superintendent or director. Whether the portfolio is part of a formal leadership evaluation or the means of directing and assessing one's own work, portfolio participants need to define the standards and expectations for school leaders.

LEADERSHIP STANDARDS, ATTRIBUTES, AND EXPECTATIONS

Those embarking on the portfolio process need first to explore definitions of leadership to focus and monitor their leadership development and overall effectiveness. This task also helps them clarify the purpose and function of the portfolio. Portfolio participants should also consider school

policy or statewide mandates related to leadership standards, attributes, and expectations of performance. A shared set of leadership standards and attributes also helps portfolio participants determine areas of focus for professional development activities.

P. David Pearson (1993) points out the importance of beginning any discussion of standards by defining the purpose and function of standards. Standards serve the following functions:

- Direct momentum: standards provide a target and act as milestones, which provide guidance en route to that target.
- Indicate performance: standards act as a yardstick that measures and defines progress.
- Clarify transactions, responsibilities, and rights: standards set boundaries for the accountability, function, and role of the standards in the learning and assessment cycle, including who will use the standards and how will they use them.

Whatever leadership standard the community of leaders constructs or adopts, the conversation and agreement on critical areas for growth is an important beginning point in the portfolio process. To clarify their roles and their definitions of standards and leadership attributes, the group might discuss the following questions (see also Figure 2.2).

- How do we define the role and function of leadership in our system?
- What standards and guidelines do we wish to employ to create common understanding and common expectations of what we strive for in our ongoing leadership development?
- What state, organizational, or national standards might assist in determining our assessments and expectations?

In the portfolio context, standards can provide guidelines for participants' discussions about capacity building. As leaders begin designing a leadership portfolio, the leadership standards, attributes, and expectations can serve as organizers for reflection and for conversations about artifacts and evidence. Of course, tying standards into the portfolio process is vital to assessment, whether self-assessment or a formal evaluation process. Assessment of the work of educational leaders addresses the areas of performance, feedback, decisions, and standards, so during the portfolio development process, leaders should ask themselves questions such as the following.

- Performance: How am I performing in the context of generating a shared purpose and goals for the school community? How much progress am I making toward those goals? How am I assessing my progress?
- Feedback: How can I get feedback from my work and from my peers to improve my performance continually?
- Decisions: How am I making decisions, and how am I assessing their impact on the school system?

Sample Standards for School Leaders

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (1996) has developed the following standards for school administrators.

Educational leaders promote the success of all students by

- facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community;
- advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
- ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
- collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
- acting with integrity and fairness and in an ethical manner; and
- understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

For more information on the work of ISLLC, see their Web site: www.ccsso.org/standards.html

Figure 2.2

- Standards: What are the district's expectations of my work? What are the school community's expectations, including staff, students, and parents? How do we, as a leadership community, define the standards for our work? What are the critical attributes and capacities of a high performing administrator?

One school district that has implemented the portfolio process has established the following eight areas of performance for administrators:

- Participate with teacher and parent groups to provide leadership.
- Support student growth and development.
- Foster a positive school climate.
- Honor diversity and promote equity of opportunity.
- Stimulate, focus, and support improvement of instruction.
- Manage administrative, fiscal, and facilities functions.
- Foster effective district team relationships.
- Promote professional development of school personnel.

Another school community crafted leadership standards and attributes based on the five competencies outlined in the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report (Packer 1992). These five competencies or areas are Resources, Technology, Information, Interpersonal, and Systems (see Figure 2.3). The Dimensions of Leadership encompass

Dimensions of Leadership

Decision making is a key aspect of the leadership role. Every decision has a consequence; reflection on past decisions prepares leaders for future decisions. The context and process they use to make decisions is at the core of the leader's work. Opportunities for continuous learning reside in input and feedback regarding this process. The Dimensions of Leadership ask leaders to learn from and continually improve the decision-making process and require leaders to have a plan to develop their professional expertise continually.

Resources—managing resources that provide the tools and environment for learning. School leaders make decisions regarding the use of resources, then they must defend allocation decisions. Decisions about the most valuable resources—school personnel—must reflect the purpose and mission of the school.

Technology—making technology accessible to all learners. Modeling the use of technology and providing opportunities to include technology to enhance learning, communication, and performance are aspects of leadership.

Information—sharing organizational information and making decisions regarding the design and implementation of instructional information. How school leaders share, gather, and use information related to curriculum, standards, students, instructional practices, and staff members contributes to the school climate and culture. The standards the school system and school leaders use to decide what to teach and how to teach it contribute to the collegial culture.

Interpersonal—communicating in both written and oral forms to establish and maintain a cohesive, professional, and respectful culture with attitudes modeled by the school leader. A school leader's communications reflect the knowledge, understanding, direction, purpose, and public face of the leader. How the leader facilitates and responds to others' communication and actions is also critical. A leader's success at resolving conflicts, interacting with community members, and facilitating the continuous learning of staff members are part of the leader's effectiveness. All interactions involve decisions and model collegiality and respect in the school system.

Systems—recognizing the design and interactions of systems. A system is a set of interdependent rules, ideas, or procedures designed to give a prescribed outcome. Learning organizations are systems that can be flexible and adapt to change, respond to needs, and sustain a process of continuous improvement. Recognizing the systems that contribute to the school system helps leaders decide about and design changes. The district is also a system. Understanding how each system works as well as understanding their interdependence are critical to facilitating change and continuous improvement.

Conversing about leadership, about change, and about each member's philosophy of education gives the leadership learning community a shared context and understanding of what it means to be an educational leader. Once the community of leaders has established standards, attributes, and expectations of leadership, the leaders are ready to move on to defining the purpose for their portfolio.

Figure 2.3

SkyLight Professional Development

the management (logistics) and leadership (purpose) of the organization (the school board, school system, or school site). Each dimension represents a critical organizational need, but dimensions offer tools to work with rather than competencies to strive for. School leaders must make decisions in the five dimension areas daily. The context in which they make these decisions is the culture of the school and the community, but the decisions are highly influenced by each leader's guiding purpose or mission. In turn, the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes the leaders use to make these leadership/management decisions create the decision-making context and build the school culture.

DEFINING THE PORTFOLIO PURPOSE

Defining leadership standards and the portfolio purpose can take place at the first roundtable session among portfolio participants. To prepare for the meeting and the discussion about purpose, participants should be sure they have a clear understanding of the purpose and function of the portfolio in the context of district expectations. If the district requires the portfolio as part of its formal assessment of school leaders, the major preparation is aligning the portfolio process with the district's existing plans and expectations. All parties must agree on the purpose of the portfolio and establish their expectations in advance of the project.

While determining the purpose of the portfolio is an individual activity involving reflecting and writing, participants should share their perceptions of the portfolio process by completing the Agreement on Purpose tool. Roundtable members then come to an agreement on how they will use the portfolio process and support each other.

Agreement on Purpose Tool

The Agreement on Purpose tool is important because having alignment regarding the purpose and desired outcome of the portfolio is a critical starting point for portfolio participants. Being aligned on purpose provides the group members with a context for decision making within the portfolio process, a yardstick to measure progress toward goals, a list of priorities for action related to the goals and the banner question, and a focus for collaboration with other portfolio participants. As each step in the portfolio process requires decisions, leaders who are clear on their purpose will be better informed to make decisions on what to focus, on what artifacts to collect, and so forth.

The Agreement on Purpose tool consists of three statements (see blackline master that follows the directions for compleeing the tool or that

appears in Appendix C). The first statement involves individual perspective of the purpose of the portfolio. The second statement asks participants to identify how they believe work with their peers and their participation in professional learning activities can improve their work. The third statement calls for them to identify three anticipated outcomes of their participation in the portfolio process.

Follow these steps for completing the tool as a group:

1. Portfolio participants take seven to ten minutes to reflect on the statements and write their responses. This time for individual reflection and response before a group discussion gives each participant a chance to articulate a response and thus promotes sharing of individual wisdom.
2. When participants finish their responses, they divide into groups of three or five, share their reflections and their response to the first question of purpose, then create a group response to the question.
3. Each group shares its responses, and when the entire group has a collective mindset of purpose, the group crafts a shared purpose statement.
4. The small groups discuss each member's response to the second statement, which helps each individual recognize the value of working together and of lifelong learning.
5. The small groups share each member's response to the third statement related to outcomes, then share the responses of the small group with the whole group. The entire group creates a master list of desired outcomes that all can see on a chart or chalkboard, eliminating redundancies and combining similar outcomes until the group has a list of about seven to twelve outcomes for the portfolio process.
6. The participants next prioritize the outcomes by means of a "Magic Marker vote." They review the outcomes and vote for priorities. Each person makes three marks on the master list to indicate his or her priorities; the person can place all three marks on one outcome or disperse them among two or three outcomes. This technique provides an accounting of the group's goals and builds the foundation for effective design and implementation of the portfolio.

An example of a completed Agreement on Purpose tool appears in Figure 2.4 and in Appendix D.

Agreement on Purpose

From my point of view, the primary purpose of the leadership portfolio is:

Collaboration and learning can enhance my work in the following ways:

I will consider my time and efforts with the portfolio worthwhile if the following events occur:

Sample Agreement on Purpose Tool

From my point of view, the primary purpose of the leadership portfolio is:

The purpose is to provide a structure and process for me and my colleagues to talk about our work. I would welcome an opportunity to have constructive feedback and, most of all, suggestions for working more effectively and efficiently. Another purpose that would serve my work would be to create an environment where we have less competition and more collaboration. The portfolio can also serve as a documentation of my work and learning.

Collaboration and learning can enhance my work in the following ways:

I would like to know more about the work of others in our school system. I seem to be informed many times after the fact. Such collaboration can offer feedback and possibly more timely flow of information. I would benefit from sharing in efforts and past experiences of others in the school system. The challenge for us is to establish an environment for collaboration, one we have not always had in the past.

I will consider my time and efforts with the portfolio worthwhile if the following events occur:

1. *We integrate the process into our current leadership meetings and assessment process.*
2. *We produce documents worthy of sharing when applying for future employment.*
3. *We build a collaboration network among leaders in our system.*

Figure 2.4

DEFINING ONE'S PHILOSOPHY

In preparing a definition of their philosophy of education, school leaders need to reflect on their knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and values about education and leadership in general and their own work in particular. While every education program asks educators to define their philosophy, sometimes this philosophy becomes buried beneath bureaucratic demands. This step of the portfolio process invites leaders to reflect once again on their philosophy and place it in the forefront as a significant influence on every aspect of their work.

Portfolio participants should complete the Defining Your Philosophy tool (a blackline master follows and also appears in Appendix C). Portfolio partners then share and compare their philosophies. Doing so sets the foundation for their work together. It allows them to see why they do what they do—what beliefs and knowledge provide the underpinnings of their work. An example of how one school leader completed the Defining Your Philosophy tool appears in Figure 2.5. The completed sample also appears in Appendix D.

SUMMARY OF PORTFOLIO CONTENTS

At the end of the first phase of the portfolio process, the portfolio contains the following materials:

- Written definition of leadership standards, attributes, and expectations
- Completed Agreement on Purpose tool
- Completed Defining Your Philosophy tool

With these materials in hand, participants are ready to move on to the second phase of the portfolio process, establishing its focus by identifying professional goals and creating a banner question.

Defining Your Philosophy

Take this opportunity to reflect on your philosophy, then share your perspectives with a partner or member of your roundtable.

What beliefs do you hold about the purpose and function of leadership?

Describe your perspective of a most effective management system or routine.

What beliefs do you hold about how people learn?

What are your top three priorities in your work?

Sample Defining Your Philosophy Tool

Take this opportunity to reflect on your philosophy, then share your perspectives with a partner or member of your roundtable.

What beliefs do you hold about the purpose and function of leadership?

The purpose of leadership is to create an environment for collaboration, commitment, and learning among the professionals and other staff members in the school system. Leaders do not have all the answers; they must develop, nurture, and draw on the expertise and wisdom of all members in the system.

Describe your perspective of a most effective management system or routine.

This is not my greatest area of strength. I have found setting goals annually is very important. When I have been disciplined enough to set goals for my work, I have been able to establish work plans to correspond with checkpoints, and the technique does seem to work. The challenge to this system is not overlooking the first step—focus and plan. Then the rest of the tactical aspects of the job seem to follow along.

What beliefs do you hold about how people learn?

I believe we learn in a very natural way, using experimentation and new information as well as prior experiences to try new things. It is through those interactions that we construct new understandings and expand our repertoire of knowledge. The information we take in to solve problems and meet new challenges adds to our knowledge and repertoire of understanding. Thus, it is a continuous process.

What are your top three priorities in your work?

My priorities are to build commitment and capacity among staff members, to offer a learner-centered instructional program, and to listen to community and other professional input regarding research, innovations, and global needs to prepare students for the future. As educators we must first do no harm!

Figure 2.5

CHAPTER 3

Focusing the Portfolio

THE CONVERGENCE OF GOALS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the first phase of the portfolio process, school leaders establish a purpose for the portfolio and explore their philosophies of leadership. The community of learners discusses leadership standards, attributes, and expectations for leadership performance in their professional setting.

In the second phase, school leaders determine the focus of their portfolio. They begin by establishing the connection among their work, goals, and professional needs. Looking at their professional goals and challenges, the school plan, and district expectations, school leaders search for a theme that aligns their goals with professional development, learning, and action, and this theme becomes the focus of their portfolio. As part of their professional development, they reflect on their personal interests as well as their needs for learning, exploration, and achievement. A leader's ultimate challenge is to be true to one's self, one's learning, and one's expertise while addressing the needs and demands of the system. To find a constructive method of melding internal and external needs and demands without conflict is the leader's challenge and imperative.

This process of searching for areas where goals, school plans, and professional learning intersect brings meaning to leaders' work and relevance to their learning.

DETERMINING GOALS IN THE PORTFOLIO

In most cases, the school board and superintendent determine an administrator's goals with input from school faculty and community members. These goals then become the driving force for action planning. Goals are usually influenced by federal and state mandates as well as community needs and have long- and short-term expectations. An example of a district's mission statement and goals follows to demonstrate how district goals, as defined by the district's mission statement, set the direction for the goals of the educational leader and, thus, the portfolio.

Misson: to be successful in the twenty-first century, District XX is committed to providing opportunities for all students to

- participate as responsible and informed citizens in a safe and healthy environment.
- use technology as a tool for communicating, learning, and working.
- acquire knowledge and skills to ensure successful and fulfilling career paths.
- engage in a rigorous academic environment with relevant learning.
- develop self-esteem and respect for self and others.
- become lifelong learners who communicate effectively, think critically, and solve problems in a team environment.

School leaders can take the district mission statement and translate it into their leadership goals. For example, based on the preceding mission statement, the Board of Education established these goals:

- All students will read, write, and calculate at their appropriate grade level according to the standards set by the state.
- Develop a revised curriculum that aligns the standards with multiple sources of student data to demonstrate learning.
- Inform parents and community members of the standards and new assessments to monitor learning.
- Design a new process for reporting student progress that aligns with the standards and assessments.
- Enhance professional development opportunities that include application of learning and peer coaching.
- Refine the administrator evaluation system.

When school leaders develop their school plan, they ask themselves questions such as the following: What mandates and unique needs am I facing this year? What are the tensions between unique site needs and district goals? The plan should include professional learning opportunities and success indicators. Leaders can examine these indicators at predetermined checkpoints during the term to monitor the plan's progress.

School Plan Essentials

A school plan should address the following essential areas:

Goals: a translation of the district goals into school goals and priorities

Budget: resources available for prioritized efforts

Time Line: time required to implement the plan and a schedule of checkpoints to monitor progress and maintain focus on priority efforts

Needs assessment: assessing the readiness of the staff to move forward after establishment of priorities. Knowing the readiness level of the staff, both psychologically and cognitively, for achieving priority efforts is essential. (Stephen Gordon [1999] defines five domains for readiness and offers twenty strategies that help plan priority efforts for school changes.)

Opportunities and resources: funding available for implementing and sustaining priority efforts

Success indicators: collection of evidence and artifacts such as student data that will demonstrate the successful outcomes of action plans

Professional learning: the needs of the school leader's work but also his or her personal desires and needs for learning. School leaders must determine what they are interested in and what they would like to know more about or do better, looking for learning opportunities in the overlap of personal and school goals.

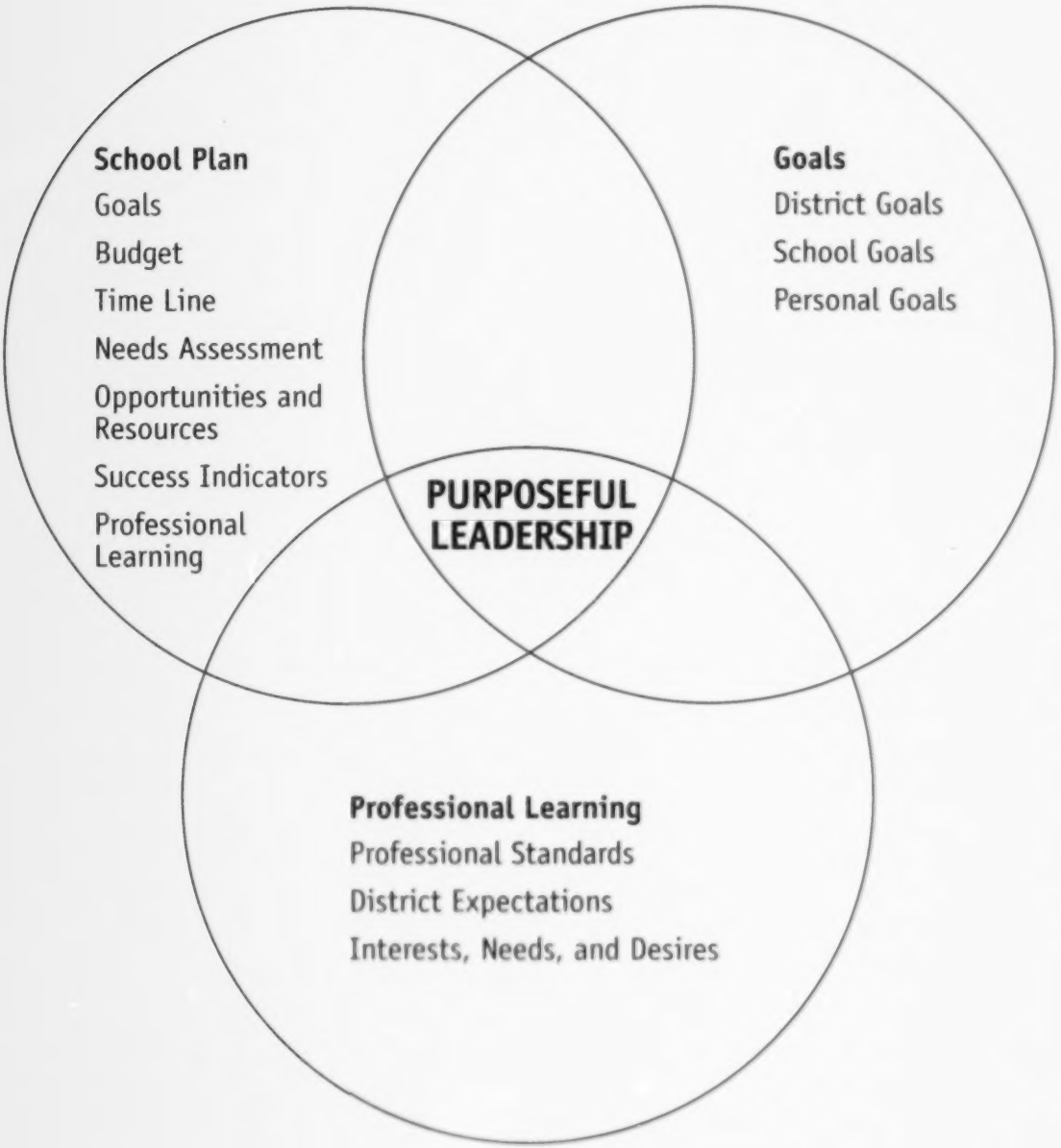
THE ON-PURPOSE LEADER

The Venn diagram that follows serves as a visual organizer of contextual leadership. (A copy of the diagram also appears in Appendix C.) School leaders can use the diagram to list personal goals along with leadership responsibilities for the year. The three areas of inquiry and development are separate yet integrated:

- **School Plan.** The school plan combines the needs of the specific site and its students with the district goals and expectations. The school plan should include the essentials listed in the preceding section.
- **Goals.** As stated previously, the goals become the driving force for action planning. In addition to district goals, school leaders should list goals unique to their school and student body and their own individual goals for professional growth.
- **Professional Learning.** School leaders should consider professional requirements but also their own interests, asking themselves the following questions:

  1. What do I want to learn more about?
  2. What knowledge and skills do I want to develop?
  3. What professional relationships do I want to enhance?

Purposeful Leadership



Blackline Master

The graphic organizer helps school leaders see and discuss with their peers any overlap and determine ways to capitalize on any redundancies, integrating their learning and their work. Then when setting professional development goals or identifying professional development activities within the portfolio, they can focus on a few specific topics that appear in the three areas of their work and professional needs.

INVOLVING SCHOOL STAFF

The next step in the process is involving staff members in the priority- and goal-setting process for the learning community. Engaging staff who report to the school leader directly in the portfolio process by aligning their goals and priorities with the school leader's helps the leader accomplish his or her goals.

Engaging staff in the portfolio process helps school leaders accomplish their goals.

The first step in joining staff members to the process is having them meet and together complete the Agreement on Priorities tool. The Agreement on Priorities tool involves them in the goal-setting process and blends school leaders' leadership work and goals with those of their colleagues. Establishing a shared purpose and folding the staff goals into the school plan give school leaders a focus for their professional work and learning and a context for collaborations with their colleagues.

The steps for completing the Agreement on Priorities tool mirror those for completing the Agreement on Purpose tool described in chapter 2. Bring staff together and introduce the tool, which consists of four statements. (See the following blackline master. Another copy of the blackline master appears in Appendix C.) The first statement involves individual perspective of the purpose and meaning of the work the staff is doing. The second statement relates to commitment and competency and asks participants to identify the skills, knowledge, and expertise they bring to the work and how committed they are to the work. The third and fourth statements have staff specify short- and long-term goals as a school community.

Follow these steps for introducing the Agreement on Priorities worksheet:

1. Explain the purpose of the meeting—identifying shared goals for the term. Describe the power of agreement on priorities: it ensures that everyone aims in the same direction and agrees on the purpose and the process for the shared journey. It also gives a shared context for decision making, a yardstick to measure progress, and a focus for collaboration and action planning.
2. Invite staff members to reflect on the statements, and allow them about seven to ten minutes to jot down their responses. (Background music invites quiet, individual reflection.) Explain the rationale for beginning with individual points of view. First, it helps avoid groupthink, where the first person to speak shares an opinion and the others agree, and rather than a sharing of individual wisdom,

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group agreement on one person's idea occurs. Second, staff members are better able to participate if they have had time to reflect and focus on the questions and formulate responses. They are more articulate and focused in their responses, having gone through a reflective composing process to distill their thinking.

3. When they finish their responses, place staff in groups of three or five. Have them share their reflections and their response to the first question of purpose, then create a group response to the question.
4. Have the small groups share their responses, and when the entire group has a collective mindset of purpose, craft a shared purpose statement.
5. Have groups discuss the second statement, which helps each individual recognize his or her own expertise as well of that of their colleagues.
6. Have groups share their responses to the third statement related to goals. Share the small-group goals with the whole group, and create a master list of goals that all can see on a chart or chalkboard. Eliminate redundancies and combine similar actions until the group has a list of about seven to twelve goals for the term.
7. Prioritize the goals by means of a "Magic Marker vote." Invite staff members to review the goals and vote for priorities. Ask them each to make three marks on the master list to indicate their priorities; they can place all three marks on one goal or disperse them among two or three goals. This technique provides an accounting of the group's priorities. The statement of purpose and the list of goals in priority order provide school leaders with a foundation on which they can generate a school or work plan for the term.
8. Have group members form action priority teams, each team assuming responsibility for one of the goals selected. The teams will check in with each other and the school leader periodically during the term. The check-in gives the leader a continual progress report and gives each action team a self-assessment on its progress toward achieving the goal.

Figure 3.1 on page 31 offers an example of one staff member's completed Agreement on Priorities tool. (The sample completed tool also appears in Appendix D.)

The next step is for school leaders to reflect on and assess their work and determine what challenges, needs, and opportunities might be on the horizon.

ESTABLISHING A BANNER QUESTION

In phase two of the portfolio process, school leaders establish a banner question for learning, collaborating, and reflecting. The purpose of the

Agreement on Priorities

From my point of view, the primary purpose of our work is:

I offer the following expertise and commitment to moving toward our shared purpose:

I will consider my time and expertise well spent if the following events occur this term:

Three years from now I hope we are able to:

banner question is to focus learning and leadership capacity building. Leaders consider the dimensions of leadership involved in their inquiry (such as the five Dimensions of Leadership Chapter 2 describes) and explore learning opportunities that will help them integrate these dimensions throughout their plan.

The Purposeful Leadership diagram that appears in this chapter and Appendix C helps leaders look for connections among their work, their professional development, and their school plans. For example, under School Plans, a school leader might write "Create a three-year budget," and under Goals, "Learn to prepare budget," and under Professional Learning, "I will take a course in finance and network with a colleague who has created a similar budget." The Agreement on Priorities worksheet the staff completed can facilitate the process of aligning staff goals with district and community goals. Leaders should use each of the worksheets in this book as tools for reflection, suggestions for action, and guidelines for identifying and organizing goals and tracking progress toward the goals. Most important, they help leaders focus on the key aspect of the portfolio process—the banner question.

The banner question is the essential question for inquiry and learning for the current year.

A reflection worksheet for formulating the banner question follows and also appears in Appendix C. The banner question is the essential question for inquiry and learning for the current year. It is the "Big Idea" question that drives school leaders' work and inquiry. It helps leaders focus their work, their conversations, and their professional learning. This question might not represent the entirety of their work; however, it represents a primary theme. It is usually related to goals, both professional development goals and work goals. Formulating a banner question takes time, reflection, and collaborative conversations.

Splinter questions are the smaller steps that lead to constructing new understanding about work and professional learning.

When completing a banner question worksheet, portfolio participants should respond to the following questions:

- What do I already know about [banner question topic]?
- What have I heard about or observed that especially interests me?
- What would I like to do differently?
- What are my wants and needs for my professional life?

As school leaders reflect on and respond to the questions, they bring their needs, concerns, and wisdom to the portfolio process, defining the focus for their portfolio work. The power of this personal reflection is magnified when they follow up individual reflections with conversations with their colleagues, either informally with a portfolio partner or more formally in a roundtable session with colleagues in diverse leadership positions within the school system. A sample completed Banner Question Worksheet appears in Figure 3.2 and Appendix D.

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Sample Agreement on Priorities Tool

From my point of view, the primary purpose of our work is:

As a fifth-grade teacher, I believe the purpose of my work is to offer relevant curriculum to my students, to engage them in learning so they have confidence in themselves as learners and in their ability to meet standards by which they will be evaluated in school and in the outside world.

I offer the following expertise and commitment to moving toward our shared purpose:

As a staff member and a member of my grade-level team, I will work toward coordinating our curriculum to address student needs and prepare students to demonstrate what they know through standards and performance assessments. I have had experiences with performance-based writing assessment and would be willing to use that experience to design other assessments with my grade-level team.

I will consider my time and expertise well spent if the following events occur this term:

1. *We set a time for and have resources for grade-level teamwork.*
2. *All staff members and parents are informed about our work with standards-based curriculum.*
3. *Students learn how to participate in performance assessments.*

Three years from now I hope we are able to:

work as school teams not just as grade-level teams! I would like to see parents involved as partners not evaluators.

Figure 3.1
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Banner Question Worksheet

Banner Question

Write banner question here; remember, you can refine the question later.

Splinter Questions

What additional questions do you need to answer before you can answer your banner question?

1. **What do I already know about [banner question topic]?**

2. **What have I heard about or observed that especially interests me?**

3. **What would I like to do differently?**

4. **What are my wants and needs for my professional life?**

Sample Banner Question Worksheet

Banner Question

Write banner question here; remember, you can refine the question later.

How can I use the mandate to design and implement standards-based curriculum with performance assessments as an opportunity to enhance and expand student learning?

Splinter Questions

What additional questions do you need to answer before you can answer your banner question?

What are successful models for performance assessments?

What additional skills and training will staff members need to design standards-based curriculum?

What information and experience will they need to understand and use performance assessments?

How will we modify our report card to reflect the new assessments and curriculum?

To what degree will we need to modify our current instructional model?

What new instruction materials will we need to make the curriculum shift?

1. What do I already know about a standards-based curriculum and performance assessment?

I am aware of several school systems that have begun the process of refining their curriculum and standards to align with the new state standards. I know that this activity must involve the entire staff if it is to impact instruction.

(Figure 3.2 continued on next page)

Sample Banner Question Worksheet

continued

2. What have I heard about or observed that especially interests me?

I have heard about a backward planning model and several technology-enabled solutions that might help achieve my goal.

3. What would I like to do differently?

I am committed to having this be an involvement and not a compliance process.

4. What are my wants and needs for my professional life?

I want to find a way to have staff members see the goals of the school plan as a challenge and become comfortable with continual change and improvement and not feel threatened by new ideas. I have learned to accept the challenge of change in my professional and personal life and hope that I can find the tools and patience to facilitate that understanding among staff members.

Figure 3.2

Refining the Banner Question

Occasionally the need arises to revise the banner question. School leaders may find themselves starting off in one direction with their banner question, then discovering another area of greater urgency or need. Or often the first stab at a banner question produces a question that is too broad, and the school leader realizes he or she has a more specific need to address. A banner question is not set in stone. Portfolio participants should seek assistance from their portfolio partners or the roundtable group to refine their banner question.

The sample banner questions in Figure 3.3 offer examples of the focusing process. After focusing the goals of the portfolio, the next phase of the portfolio process is developing a portfolio plan and a process for participation and learning through collaboration with one's colleagues.

Sample Banner Questions

The following examples demonstrate the range of banner questions created by school leaders who have participated in the leadership portfolio process. These questions emerged through reflective roundtable conversations among one group of school leaders. Each became a banner question and the focus for a school leader's portfolio.

- How can I serve as a change agent and still meet the needs of a varied constituency?
- How can I serve as a change agent and meet mandates and assessment demands?
- How can the emphasis on assessment stimulate improvement in curriculum and instruction?
- What constitutes professional growth?
- Will improving the quality of relationships within the school community contribute to our goal of helping all students succeed intellectually and personally?
- Does instructional technology improve student learning?
- How can technology enhance learning?
- How can we deal more effectively with the needs of our increasingly diverse school population?
- Is educational change possible without a common educational purpose?
- How can I support and encourage an integrated curriculum?
- How can we combine multiple methods of evaluation to support learning and comply with accountability demands?
- What is the purpose and function of education in the global workplace?
- How can I build community support, awareness, and involvement in these times of uncertainty regarding the future of education?

Figure 3.3

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SUMMARY OF PORTFOLIO CONTENTS

At the end of the second phase of the portfolio process, the portfolio contains the following materials.

From phase one, Purpose for Work:

- Written definition of leadership standards, attributes, and expectations
- Completed Agreement on Purpose tool
- Completed Defining Your Philosophy tool

From phase two, Focus for Learning:

- Completed Purposeful Leadership diagram
- Completed Agreement on Priorities tool
- Banner Question Worksheet

CHAPTER 4

The Process of Collaboration and Professional Development

FACILITATING LEARNING THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DIALOGUE AND INFORMATION

After establishing the portfolio purpose and focus, the next phase of the portfolio process is collaborating with others and engaging in learning activities. In this phase, school leaders develop a learning plan, establish collaborations to facilitate and support their learning, select professional growth activities based on the banner question, and collect artifacts and evidence regarding their learning. Each step in the portfolio process helps school leaders develop and enhance their abilities.

CREATING A LEARNING PLAN

The school leader's learning plan uses results of the Defining Your Philosophy tool, the Purposeful Leadership diagram, and the Banner Question Worksheet to plan formal and informal professional development opportunities. In their learning plan, school leaders list professional development activities, artifacts, evidence, outcomes, and reflections as well as applications of professional learning to their work.

At this time, school leaders list the professional development activities they are involved in currently. They continue to add activities to the plan as they move through the portfolio process and collaborate with others.

School leaders might consider keeping a Professional Development Activities Log to record suggestions, contacts, and information sources for professional development activities and share their logs at roundtable sessions. A Professional Development Activities Log appears below and also in Appendix C. Examples of common professional development activities follow:

- Visit other schools to observe new practices in action (such as block scheduling in a high school or grade-level team planning in an elementary school) and learn how these new ideas and practices were organized and successfully implemented.
- Attend seminars.
- Meet with others who have similar goals and professional interests.
- Observe teaching and group facilitation in progress and take notes for later reflection.
- Invite a colleague to observe a staff meeting or workshop the school leader conducts.
- Read articles in professional journals.
- Join a study group whose focus is related to the leader's goals.
- Research information related to the banner question.
- Join a professional organization for school leaders.

The next steps in this phase follow:

- Select a portfolio partner who acts as peer coach and helps with specific areas for professional growth.
- Identify specific areas for learning, research, and expansion of knowledge related to the banner question.
- Establish success indicators for the goals set in phase two.
- Schedule roundtable discussions to reflect and collaborate on learning with other portfolio participants.

Figure 4.1 is an example of one school leader's Professional Development Activities Log based on the banner question, "How can I enhance our district's capacity to build a standards-based curriculum and respond to accountability demands?" This school leader has completed some of these activities and has listed target dates for those she plans to complete during the school year. (A copy of the completed log also appears in Appendix D.)

IDENTIFYING A PORTFOLIO PARTNER

One of the most powerful learning opportunities in the portfolio process is establishment of a peer coaching relationship with a colleague who is also moving through the portfolio process. Portfolio partners help each other with specific areas for professional growth by listening, asking questions, and offering assistance and encouragement through all phases of the port-

Professional Development Activities Log

Date Activity

Sample Professional Development Activities Log

Date	Activity
Done:	
10/00	*I read* Understanding by Design *by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe.*
10/00	*I observed my portfolio partner to watch interaction with staff.*
11/00	*I visited a school where staff members use a standards-based curriculum.*
2/01	*I read* Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self-Interest *by Peter Block.*
To do:	
2/01	*Build plan for establishing an action research project for performance assessments.*
3/01	*Attend Conference on Intelligent Behavior.*
4/01	*Attend Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) national conference.*
4/01	*Enroll in Leadership in the Future class at the university.*
5/01	*Participate in community planning project.*
5/01	*Attend State Administrator Association conference.*
5/01	*Read* Mapping the Big Picture: Integrating Curriculum and Assessment K–12.
5/01	*Read* Performance Assessment and Standards-based Curricula *by Allan A. Glatthorn.*

Figure 4.1

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folio process. Some portfolio participants prefer partners; others prefer working in a team. Working with a partner and as part of a team is the most effective and efficient combination because it offers frequent, informal meetings with a single peer coach and the benefit of numerous viewpoints and ideas from the larger group.

BENEFITS OF PEER COLLABORATION

The key to transforming and growing with the work rather than just doing the job is to commit to trusting, sustained relationships with colleagues. Such relationships improve professional learning, encourage feedback, and promote progress in the school system. The challenge is building trusting relationships in which peers can rely on each other for support, information, and feedback. Successful relationships demand a time commitment, which allows for meetings where school leaders can talk about work challenges, successes, and failures. To ensure continued success, members must also commit to sustaining the relationship.

The key to transforming and growing is to commit to trusting, sustained relationships with colleagues.

Portfolio partners help school leaders lay foundations for building trusting relationship within their school systems. The more informal relationship among partners allows for conversations that might begin, "How did the meeting go?" "Have you been able to get closer to an agreement with the teacher's union?" "How about lunch Thursday? We can work on our challenge of linking student learning to professional development."

Partner meetings should remain informal and occur as needed. Partners can use the meetings to reflect on daily decisions and other experiences related to their banner questions. They can also discuss similar needs and goals, their purpose for the portfolio process, each leader's scope of leadership, and how they can support each other. Other activities collaborators might pursue follow:

- Discuss current, pressing issues.
- Refine the banner question.
- Consider which professional development activities to pursue.
- Share learning plans and goals and make adaptations.
- Make plans to observe the partner conduct meetings and workshops.
- Ask for feedback or input regarding a past or upcoming decision.
- Ask for suggestions regarding activities designated in the learning plan.
- Share artifacts and evidence from the portfolio.
- Share current research and learning.

IDENTIFY AREAS FOR LEARNING

Portfolio partners can help each other identify areas for learning, research, and expansion of knowledge. Partners may ask each other questions such as those that follow on the next page.

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- What do you want to know more about?
- What do you want to be able to do?
- What will help you reach your goals for the term?
- What type of learning environment will help you improve your skills?

For example, an assistant superintendent creates the following banner question: "What is the balance between participating in professional development activities and meeting accountability demands for performance among educators?" She intends to use the portfolio as part of her evaluation process. As she has responsibilities in the area of personnel, one of her goals is establishing an effective professional development model in the district and negotiating with the teacher's union to include professional development and alternative teacher assessments in the teachers' new contract. One of the items for discussion is teachers using the portfolio process as a form of alternative assessment that also promotes professional growth. The school leader and her portfolio partner might discuss what information she needs to accomplish her goal. Whom might she visit or talk with to gain new understanding or see models to consider?

ESTABLISHING SUCCESS INDICATORS

The work or school plan lists specific goals. The next step is to determine what indicators to use to assess progress toward meeting those goals. In the preceding example of designing a districtwide professional development model for teachers and negotiating alternative assessment with the teacher's union, this school leader might assess current professional development activities, specifically, their effect on classroom instruction and areas for improvement. Indicators might be documentation of past practices and suggestions for improved planning. Establishing an open negotiation process with the union will accommodate research and input from both sides.

For the school leader who wishes to construct a standards-based curriculum, indicators might be establishing grade-level teams and designing and implementing a process to help teachers understand the purpose and process for standards-based instruction at their grade level. These examples are benchmark indicators. They align with staff's establishment of priorities, which includes constructing an action plan and moving toward a shared, schoolwide goal. The benchmarks help identify success indicators and assess every step of the process of achieving the goals set out in the action plan, and, thus, help leaders make appropriate adaptations in subsequent steps in the process.

COLLECTING ARTIFACTS AND EVIDENCE

Artifacts and evidence are success indicators in the portfolio process. Artifacts represent an incident or lesson that was significant to the learning

process. Evidence consists of data and concrete illustrations that validate and confirm the learning and findings that take place through the portfolio process.

As school leaders collect artifacts and evidence, they might record them in a registry to establish an ongoing profile of their learning journey. Many portfolio users have found tools such as the Artifacts and Evidence Registry and the Professional Development Activities Log very helpful during their first experience with the portfolio process. (A blackline master of the registry appears on the next page and also appears in Appendix C.) In subsequent years, they organize and move through the process by focusing mainly on a banner question and the reflective collaborations. School leaders should use the tools and worksheets the book offers if they help focus and facilitate movement through the process but put the tools aside if they become a chore or a distraction to learning. Those school leaders who at some point decide to construct an employment portfolio and use the portfolio process as part of their professional assessment will find that the tools provide structure and records for the assessment process. Figure 4.2 is an example of one school leader's Artifacts and Evidence Registry. (A copy of the completed registry also appears in Appendix D.)

Artifacts and evidence are success indicators in the portfolio process.

Remember, artifacts and evidence are not the same. The following story about an artifact collected by a first-year administrator highlights the difference.

Administrator "A" was one of three administrators in a high school. All thirty-five administrators in the district were participating in the portfolio process. They met in their roundtable sessions every two weeks. This administrator's primary area of responsibility and her goals focused on maintenance and improvement of physical buildings and grounds and improving school climate and morale. Her banner question was, "How can I improve the physical environment at our high school?" Her plan was to involve students, teachers, other staff members, and, ultimately, community members. At the second roundtable session, she shared her frustrations about staff members' unwillingness to participate on a committee or even contribute ideas to improve the campus. Her colleagues asked her coaching questions such as "Who in your immediate scope of reporting might help you?" and "What would be a good place to begin improvements?"

The administrator was sure that the school's groundskeeper was the answer to both these questions. Her peers suggested she ask the groundskeeper what he needed to begin the improvement process and where he recommended that the two of them begin. Together, they decided to begin by cleaning up the bushes and trees around the edge of the campus. The groundskeeper needed a chain saw to remove low branches from the trees. One bright morning, the chain saw buzzed off the lower limbs of the trees, and by noon the administrator had an office full of students complaining that the space was destroyed! It turns out that the branches were great protection for unauthorized smoking during class breaks! The surprising

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Artifacts and Evidence Registry

Briefly list any artifact or evidence that causes reflection and prompts collaboration related to your banner question.

Sample Artifacts and Evidence Registry

This school leader collected data in response to the banner question "How can I enhance our district's capacity to build a standards-based curriculum and respond to accountability demands?"

Briefly list any artifact or evidence that causes reflection and prompts collaboration related to your banner question.

Student data from action research

Initial proposal from teacher's union for negotiations

Reflections from reading *Stewardship*

Model of a scale representing the delicacy of balance in work, in life

Copy of district standards for administrators

Standards for professional development from National Staff Development Council

Samples of curriculum backward planning using *Understanding by Design*

Design for assessing current state of grade-level curriculum and aligning with standards

Coaching models for building grade-level teams

Figure 4.2

SkyLight Professional Development

experience that administrator "A" had after the groundskeeper trimmed the trees, as described on page 43, led to a positive aftermath. The students wanted to be involved from that point on. By the end of the term, community members joined forces with the art teacher and students in rendering a mural on the outside gymnasium wall. The campus was transformed. The artifact this administrator brought to reflect on at the closing roundtable was the chain saw!

SCHEDULING ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

For the leadership portfolio process to have impact across all systems within a school or district, school leaders need to come together to reflect and collaborate. The roundtable provides portfolio participants with an opportunity to work together several times during the term to share progress, pose questions, and refocus their learning.

The roundtable may be a work team such as a district office leadership group or a site level leadership team. In some districts, a roundtable is composed of portfolio partners who share similar purposes and banner questions. Ideal group size is six to eight participants.

It helps to set a schedule for roundtable sessions at the beginning of the portfolio process with everyone in agreement. Setting themes for the roundtable sessions based on the four portfolio phases assists in pacing participants through the portfolio process and focusing the conversations during the sessions. Roundtable sessions usually last one to two hours. Leaders who once claimed they did not have the time or discipline to collaborate, reflect, and learn together find the roundtable discussions invaluable. Figure 4.3 offers a sample set of roundtable discussion topics.

Throughout the portfolio process, it is vital to remember the importance of building trusting relationships. As Wheatley (1992) reminds us, if relationships work, the work goes well. It is the trusting relationships, the shared purpose, and the continual sharing and restructuring of information that guides school systems into the Information Age. The portfolio process gives school leaders practice and experience in all three areas.

SUMMARY OF PORTFOLIO CONTENTS

At the end of the third phase of the portfolio process, the portfolio contains the following materials:

From phase one, Purpose for Work:

- Written definition of leadership standards, attributes, and expectations
- Completed Agreement on Purpose tool
- Completed Defining Your Philosophy tool

Sample Roundtable Discussion Plan

Establishing themes for roundtable sessions sets the pace for the term and helps participants assess the final outcomes from the portfolio process at the end of the term.

Define portfolio purpose and district assessment parameters.

- Share Agreement of Purpose sheets.
- Clarify agreement regarding assessment and collaboration.
- Agree on process for the portfolio.

Formulate banner question and splinter questions.

- Discuss banner questions and help clarify interest, purpose, need, etc.
- Consider possible splinter questions.
- Consider possible themes emerging from banner question and splinter questions.

Collect artifacts and evidence.

- Identify indicators for assessing progress toward and success with goals.
- Review and discuss artifacts and evidence.
- Clarify questions, observations, and learning.

Design professional development plan.

- Discuss current activities and what they might contribute to the plan.
- Offer suggestions for additional professional development activities.
- Clarify connections among activities, portfolio themes, and work goals.

Assess partner meetings.

- Review progress with partner meeting sessions.
- Consider additional collaborations such as peer coaching.
- Discuss collaborations that are working and those that are not to receive feedback and suggestions.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the portfolio process.

- Reflect on the most effective parts of the portfolio process.
- Invite suggestions to improve process in this setting.
- Establish focus for next roundtable.

Figure 4.3

SkyLight Professional Development

From phase two, Focus for Learning:

- Completed Purposeful Leadership diagram
- Completed Agreement on Priorities tool
- Banner Question Worksheet

From phase three, Process for Collaboration:

- Learning plan
- Professional Development Activities Log
- List of success indicators
- Artifacts and Evidence Registry
- Roundtable Discussion Plan

CHAPTER 5

Portfolio Outcomes for Continuous Improvement

ASSESSING OUTCOMES AND DEFINING NEXT STEPS

The final portion of the portfolio process is the outcomes phase. In this phase, school leaders have the opportunity to put all the pieces together, to review the entire process, and to look for overlap or redundancies in their learning and their efforts. Looking at outcomes calls for portfolio participants to acknowledge their accomplishments and identify the next steps in their professional growth.

With the emphasis in education on accountability, educators must seek performance assessment models that enable them to monitor and learn through their work rather than to evaluate and measure. This distinction is critical toward becoming a learning organization. School leaders who establish a cultural norm for professional work and professional learning have gone a long way toward defining a new set of expectations for members of their school system.

At this point, portfolio participants should return to their shared purpose and agreements regarding the portfolio and determine how the portfolio process links with the performance assessment process in their education setting. They should also determine what leadership standards and attributes the portfolio monitored.

Review of Artifacts and Evidence

The review of the artifacts and evidence is ongoing as is the process of sharing learning, collecting and evaluating data, and refining action plans. At the outcomes stage, leaders summarize their learning and their assessment for next steps by reviewing their original goals and learning plan. They look for evidence that they achieved their goals and learned lessons. Leaders take these steps in the outcome process:

1. Review goals and plans.
2. Organize and assess data.
3. Summarize learning and plans for next steps.
4. Using the tools and worksheets, prepare a summary of learning and reflections.
5. Present or exhibit the summary at a roundtable session, and celebrate by sharing learning with colleagues in the roundtable group.
6. Identify the possible next banner question.

Additionally, if the portfolio process is part of the formal district assessment, the school leader might have a conference with his or her supervisor or sponsor and complete documentation agreed on at the initial portfolio purpose-setting session. School leaders might assess outcomes more informally if they use the portfolio for professional development only, and it is not linked to the school system's assessment of the school leader.

Celebrate your learning with colleagues in your roundtable group.

Final Reflections

Regardless of the purpose of the portfolio, it is important to create a space for professional dialogue and reflection, to learn from the journey of the past year, and to set expectations for the coming term. Reflective questions about professional work, learning, and collaboration bring closure to the process. Many leadership groups have found the questions that appear in Outcomes of the Portfolio Process helpful in framing their final reflections and assessments. The blackline master follows and also appears in Appendix C.

Figure 5.1 presents one school leader's Outcomes tool (a copy of the completed outcomes tool also appears in Appendix D). This leader's banner question was "How can I enhance our district's capacity to build a standards-based curriculum and respond to accountability demands?"

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Outcomes of the Portfolio Process

Write your reflections on the portfolio process.

What articulation, sharing, demonstrating, and exhibiting have you done regarding your portfolio?

What new questions have emerged from your inquiry?

How have your beliefs been challenged or changed?

What is a possible future banner question?

Sample Outcomes of the Portfolio Process

Write your reflections on the portfolio process

Participating in the portfolio process has provided an opportunity to learn, reflect, and make important connections with other educational leaders both in and out of our system. I began this year with an extreme feeling of pressure regarding the charge of building a standards-based curriculum and linking it to performance assessment. I was determined to find a way to make this more than a task. I really wanted to see a shift in instruction and for the teachers to own and share this challenge. Participation in the roundtable gave me the energy and courage to try and do this the RIGHT way. I presented to the School Board the option for building a standards-based curriculum. We could produce a document that contains a neatly organized curriculum aligned to the standards, or we could engage the teachers in the process of designing a standards-based curriculum that assists us in striving to improve and drastically modify what and how we teach and assess. The second option has the potential to build teacher capacity for teaching to the standards. Producing a curriculum document does not assure a change in instruction. There is a greater likelihood that instruction will shift if teachers are engaged in the design process.

With the sponsorship in the school system and the support of the Board, we took the teacher-as-professional route. It is paying off. It has been a leadership challenge to focus on building capacity and commitment and letting go of the control and compliance. I have learned a great deal about myself and my need for feedback from others. The professional network we have established will continue to be an asset in my work. Collecting artifacts and evidence to share also helped me in pacing and focusing my work. Aiming for goals was important, but doing the work, with permission to adapt and facilitate the process with staff members, was where the bulk of my energy was spent. As a result of working through the portfolio process, I have come to realize the impact of isolation on my work as well as the verve that entered my work as I opened myself and my professional workspace to others.

(Figure 5.1 continued on next page)

Sample Outcomes of the Portfolio Process

continued

What articulation, sharing, demonstrating, and exhibiting have you done regarding your portfolio?

I have shared my portfolio with members of my roundtable and with my portfolio partner. I also belong to a local administrator association where I have shared the model I developed for building a standards-based curriculum. These demonstrations have opened the door for new information and resources regarding the performance assessments, our next big challenge in the school system!

What new questions have emerged from your inquiry?

As a result of participation in the portfolio process, I am seeking new ways to define and describe professional development. I am asking questions about the evaluation of educators—teachers and administrators. What is the purpose and function of the evaluation process, and is it accomplishing that purpose in its current form?

How have your beliefs been challenged or changed?

The greatest challenge I have faced this year is finding the balance in my work and my life. I am continually perplexed about how we so often compromise or set aside our belief and our truth in the name of getting it done. That compliant mindset will not get us where we need to go with students. This belief is a constant with me, and the change might be that together we could accomplish a great deal.

What is a possible future banner question?

My banner question for next year will be part two of what I started this year. I will move on to extended implementation and connecting performance assessment and multiple sources of student data to the new, standards-based curriculum.

Figure 5.1

LEADERS AS LEARNERS

Figure 5.2 presents a sample implementation plan developed by one district that made a commitment to leaders as learners. Having sponsorship and systems support to implement and adapt the process to meet the needs of leaders requires a plan and a willingness to make adaptations along the way.

Figure 5.3 offers an example of a final portfolio checklist. Used as a table of contents for portfolio participation, the Portfolio Journey organizes the artifacts and evidence of the leader's portfolio process.

Sample Implementation Plan—Leadership Development Portfolio

Month	Session
July	Organize portfolio design team, which customizes the portfolio for all district leaders. Meet with design team to discuss the Purpose and Focus phases of the portfolio, and gather questions, comments and concerns on the part of participants.
August	Review Purpose and Focus, the expectations and standards for forming and facilitating the portfolio process
September	Share the work of the portfolio design team with entire group and make modifications based on feedback.
October	Portfolio checkpoint on phase one—Purpose. Begin the portfolio process with the portfolio purpose.
November	Portfolio checkpoint on phase two—Focus. Meet in roundtable groups and formulate and discuss banner questions. Portfolio group meets to share banner questions and form study groups.
December	Portfolio checkpoint on phase three—Process for Collaboration. Give and receive feedback regarding progress with learning plans and study groups.
February	Portfolio checkpoint on phase three. Give and receive feedback regarding progress with learning plans and study groups.
April	Portfolio checkpoint on phase three. Give and receive feedback in roundtable group.
June	Portfolio checkpoint on phase four—outcomes. Share learning with roundtable group.

Figure 5.2

Portfolio Journey

Phase 1: PURPOSE—Define Portfolio Purpose

- ❑ Define my professional role and the purpose of my portfolio.
- ❑ Identify my values, beliefs, and standards regarding my profession in a philosophy statement.

Phase 2: FOCUS—Establish Goals

- ❑ List my professional goals to focus my learning.
- ❑ Align my professional goals with districtwide goals.
- ❑ Create banner question.

Phase 3: PROCESS—Develop a Learning Plan and Collaborate with Peers

- ❑ Design an action learning plan.
- ❑ Keep log of activities related to my professional growth.
- ❑ Collect artifacts and evidence such as the following:
  - Information and data related to student achievement
  - Workshop materials
  - Descriptions of staff development
  - Observation notes

Phase 4: OUTCOMES—Reflect on Learning

- ❑ Prepare summary and conclusions and share the following:
  - Observations
  - Student data
  - Next steps

Figure 5.3

UNEXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE PORTFOLIO PROCESS

The very act of participating in the portfolio process can lead individuals in new directions or cause them to look at their professions and themselves in a new way. The process can provide a focus that working alone cannot. For example, in one district participating in the portfolio process, the district office administrators met once a month. The assistant superintendent, whose goals and responsibilities included personnel, had the following banner question: What constitutes professional development? The leader's learning plan included looking at alternative forms of staff development, especially programs that support systemic changes. Models such

as study groups and action research were some examples of her explorations. Her splinter questions took her to areas of learning to examine the balance between accountability and learning among professional educators, and that became her banner question for the next year. Her learning and collaborations were such that she felt as though she had just scratched the surface, and deeper investigation and data collection were necessary to satisfy her goal of balancing accountability of personnel with their professional learning. As with so many others who have participated in the portfolio process, the portfolio process guided her questions, her investigations, her outcomes, and, ultimately, her professional growth.

Leaders who have participated in the portfolio process identify key benefits and lessons. These benefits and lessons appear in Figure 5.4.

Primary Benefits and Lessons of the Portfolio

Benefits

Builds teams and collaborations

Facilitates and focuses learning

Invites feedback about effectiveness

Identifies contributions to school community

Connects learning with work

Lessons learned

Commitment is essential.

Scheduled time for collaboration is necessary.

Connections with work and other portfolio participants are powerful!

Figure 5.4

SUMMARY OF PORTFOLIO CONTENTS

At the end of the final phase of the portfolio process, the portfolio contains the following materials:

From phase one, Purpose for Work:

- Written definition of leadership standards, attributes, and expectations
- Completed Agreement on Purpose tool
- Completed Defining Your Philosophy tool

From phase two, Focus for Learning:

- Completed Purposeful Leadership diagram
- Completed Agreement on Priorities tool
- Banner Question Worksheet

From phase three, Process for Collaboration:

- Learning plan
- Professional Development Activities Log
- List of success indicators
- Artifacts and Evidence Registry
- Roundtable Discussion Plan

From phase four, Outcomes for Improvement:

- Summary of learning and reflections
- List of next steps
- Outcomes of the Portfolio Process tool

CHAPTER 6

Technology and the Portfolio Process

EMPLOYING ELECTRONIC SUPPORT

Technology supports each phase of the leadership portfolio process (see Figure 6.1). School leaders can track their progress and capture their reflections electronically. They may use varied technologies to collect and record portfolio information. Portfolio partners and teams may use connected technologies to communicate.

Technology and Purpose for Work

As school leaders meet to define their purpose and examine leadership attributes and standards, a recorder may note key ideas on a laptop computer and print it for distribution to group members. These notes will assist portfolio participants as they record their agreements on purpose and define their philosophy. They will continue to use these technology tools to enhance and streamline the process as they move on to the second phase of the process.

Technology and Focus for Learning

In developing a banner question, portfolio participants examine and reflect on district goals, school plans, and professional and personal learning

goals and needs. They may use documents from their district or other information from Internet searches, storing documents and results of searches on disks or a Zip drive.

As a group, they may use computer software to create visual organizers that assist in planning.

Formulating a banner question takes time, reflection, and collaborative conversations. While leaders may have many of these conversations in person, the group can also communicate by means of a conference phone call or by participating in Internet chat room discussions.

Technology and Process for Collaboration

During this phase, portfolio participants plan and collect artifacts and evidence regarding their learning and discuss their progress with a portfolio partner. One partner might record suggestions, contacts, and information sources on a data base, another partner might use Palm Pilot technology to record information. Both partners might use scanners and digital or video cameras to collect artifacts and record them in a computer registry or on a compact disc. When partners are unable to meet, they might send the artifact pictures and documents as e-mail attachments. Portfolio participants can use listservs to share information in remote roundtable discussions. A listserv posts messages to each of the listserv subscribers through e-mail.

Technology and Outcomes for Improvement

The outcomes phase of the portfolio process allows leaders to synthesize their learning. It is a time of review and continuing reflection. If leaders have stored portfolio evidence on disk, they can share it by using a data projector. This is a time to call upon technology to demonstrate, illustrate, and exhibit learnings as well as identify next steps.

Technology Resource Guide for the Portfolio Process

PORTFOLIO PHASE	KEY ACTIVITIES	TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT
Purpose for Work	Define philosophy. Define leadership attributes. Define standards. Establish portfolio purpose.	Use computer word processing, e-mail, and Internet searches of district documents to clarify, combine, and formulate goals and essential questions.
Focus for Learning	Set goals. Develop a banner question.	Use computer word processing, e-mail, and the Internet to formulate, research, and clarify.
Process for Collaboration	Gather artifacts and evidence. Hold roundtable discussions.	Use a scanner, Zip drive, modem, digital camera, palm organizer, e-mail, conference calls, video cameras, and videocassette recorders to share reflections, research, and information.
Outcomes for Improvement	Assess and articulate learning. Decide next steps.	Use computer presentation software and hardware to illustrate and demonstrate learning and next steps.

Figure 6.1

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Appendices

Contents

The following appendices contain materials on the leadership portfolio process that are designed for reproduction for the reader's convenience.

Appendix A: Portfolio Process (overhead transparency)

Appendix B: Introduction to the Portfolio Process (overhead transparency)

Appendix C: Blacklines of Portfolio Tools. Blacklines appear in the following order:

- Agreement on Purpose
- Defining Your Philosophy
- Purposeful Leadership
- Agreement on Priorities
- Banner Question Worksheet
- Professional Development Activities Log
- Artifacts and Evidence Registry
- Outcomes of the Portfolio Process

Appendix D: Sample Completed Portfolio Tools. Completed tools that serve as examples appear in the following order:

- Sample Agreement on Purpose Tool
- Sample Defining Your Philosophy Tool
- Sample Agreement on Priorities Tool
- Sample Banner Question Worksheet
- Sample Professional Development Activities Log
- Sample Artifacts and Evidence Registry
- Sample Outcomes of the Portfolio Process

Portfolio Process

Portfolio Process

PURPOSE

Philosophy • Leadership Attributes and Standards

FOCUS

Goals • Banner Question

PROCESS

Plans • Artifacts & Evidence • Activities • Roundtable Sessions

OUTCOMES

Assessment and Sharing of Learning • Reflection • New Goals

Steps in the Portfolio Process

Steps in the Portfolio Process

Introduction to the Portfolio Process

Step 1: Participate in the initial **purpose**-setting session.

Step 2: **Focus** portfolio by identifying goals and establishing banner question.

Step 3: Identify a portfolio partner and a collaboration network, begin **process** of collaboration and activities

Ongoing Activities Within the Portfolio Process

Step 4: Set school/district and professional development goals, establish learning plans, and collect artifacts and evidence.

Step 5: Design a Professional Growth Plan.

Step 6: Engage in roundtable sessions.

Step 7: Assess **outcomes** and determine effectiveness of the process; make adaptations as indicated.

Blacklines of Portfolio Tools

Agreement on Purpose

From my point of view, the primary purpose of the leadership portfolio is:

Collaboration and learning can enhance my work in the following ways:

I will consider my time and efforts with the portfolio worthwhile if the following events occur:

Defining Your Philosophy

Take this opportunity to reflect on your philosophy, then share your perspectives with a partner or member of your roundtable.

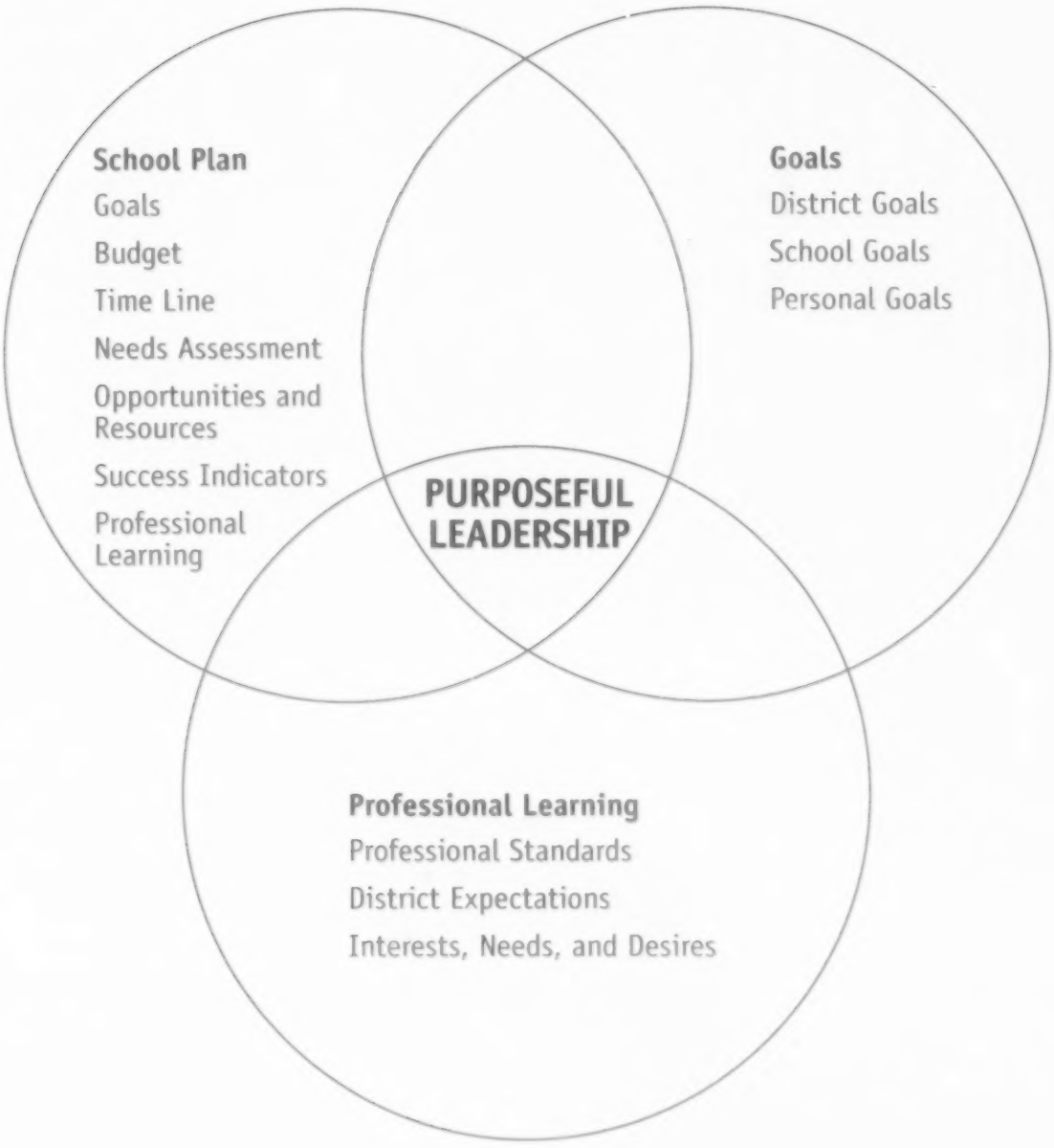
What beliefs do you hold about the purpose and function of leadership?

Describe your perspective of a most effective management system or routine.

What beliefs do you hold about how people learn?

What are your top three priorities in your work?

Purposeful Leadership



Agreement on Priorities

From my point of view, the primary purpose of our work is:

I offer the following expertise and commitment to moving toward our shared purpose:

I will consider my time and expertise well spent if the following events occur this term:

Three years from now I hope we are able to:

Banner Question Worksheet

Banner Question

Write banner question here; remember, you can refine the question later.

Splinter Questions

What additional questions do you need to answer before you can answer your banner question?

1. **What do I already know about [banner question topic]?**

2. **What have I heard about or observed that especially interests me?**

3. **What would I like to do differently?**

4. **What are my wants and needs for my professional life?**

Professional Development Activities Log

Date	Activity

Artifacts and Evidence Registry

Briefly list any artifact or evidence that causes reflection and prompts collaboration related to your banner question.

Outcomes of the Portfolio Process

Write your reflections on the portfolio process.

What articulation, sharing, demonstrating, and exhibiting have you done regarding your portfolio?

What new questions have emerged from your inquiry?

How have your beliefs been challenged or changed?

What is a possible future banner question?

Sample Completed Portfolio Tools

Sample Agreement on Purpose Tool

From my point of view, the primary purpose of the leadership portfolio is:

The purpose is to provide a structure and process for me and my colleagues to talk about our work. I would welcome an opportunity to have constructive feedback and, most of all, suggestions for working more effectively and efficiently. Another purpose that would serve my work would be to create an environment where we have less competition and more collaboration. The portfolio can also serve as a documentation of my work and learning.

Collaboration and learning can enhance my work in the following ways:

I would like to know more about the work of others in our school system. I seem to be informed many times after the fact. Such collaboration can offer feedback and possibly more timely flow of information. I would benefit from sharing in efforts and past experiences of others in the school system. The challenge for us is to establish an environment for collaboration, one we have not always had in the past.

I will consider my time and efforts with the portfolio worthwhile if the following events occur:

1. *We integrate the process into our current leadership meetings and assessment process.*

2. *We produce documents worthy of sharing when applying for future employment.*

3. *We build a collaboration network among leaders in our system.*

Sample Defining Your Philosophy Tool

Take this opportunity to reflect on your philosophy, then share your perspectives with a partner or member of your roundtable.

What beliefs do you hold about the purpose and function of leadership?

The purpose of leadership is to create an environment for collaboration, commitment, and learning among the professionals and other staff members in the school system. Leaders do not have all the answers; they must develop, nurture, and draw on the expertise and wisdom of all members in the system.

Describe your perspective of a most effective management system or routine.

This is not my greatest area of strength. I have found setting goals annually is very important. When I have been disciplined enough to set goals for my work, I have been able to establish work plans to correspond with checkpoints, and the technique does seem to work. The challenge to this system is not overlooking the first step—focus and plan. Then the rest of the tactical aspects of the job seem to follow along.

What beliefs do you hold about how people learn?

I believe we learn in a very natural way, using experimentation and new information as well as prior experiences to try new things. It is through those interactions that we construct new understandings and expand our repertoire of knowledge. The information we take in to solve problems and meet new challenges adds to our knowledge and repertoire of understanding. Thus, it is a continuous process.

What are your top three priorities in your work?

My priorities are to build commitment and capacity among staff members, to offer a learner-centered instructional program, and to listen to community and other professional input regarding research, innovations, and global needs to prepare students for the future. As educators we must first do no harm!

Sample Agreement on Priorities Tool

From my point of view, the primary purpose of our work is:

As a fifth-grade teacher, I believe the purpose of my work is to offer relevant curriculum to my students, to engage them in learning so they have confidence in themselves as learners and in their ability to meet standards by which they will be evaluated in school and in the outside world.

I offer the following expertise and commitment to moving toward our shared purpose:

As a staff member and a member of my grade-level team, I will work toward coordinating our curriculum to address student needs and prepare students to demonstrate what they know through standards and performance assessments. I have had experiences with performance-based writing assessment and would be willing to use that experience to design other assessments with my grade-level team.

I will consider my time and expertise well spent if the following events occur this term:

1. *We set a time for and have resources for grade-level teamwork.*
2. *All staff members and parents are informed about our work with standards-based curriculum.*
3. *Students learn how to participate in performance assessments.*

Three years from now I hope we are able to:

work as school teams not just as grade-level teams! I would like to see parents involved as partners not evaluators.

Sample Banner Question Worksheet

Banner Question

Write banner question here; remember, you can refine the question later.

How can I use the mandate to design and implement standards-based curriculum with performance assessments as an opportunity to enhance and expand student learning?

Splinter Questions

What additional questions do you need to answer before you can answer your banner question?

What are successful models for performance assessments?

What additional skills and training will staff members need to design standards-based curriculum?

What information and experience will they need to understand and use performance assessments?

How will we modify our report card to reflect the new assessments and curriculum?

To what degree will we need to modify our current instructional model?

What new instruction materials will we need to make the curriculum shift?

1. **What do I already know about a standards-based curriculum and performance assessment?**

   I am aware of several school systems that have begun the process of refining their curriculum and standards to align with the new state standards. I know that this activity must involve the entire staff if it is to impact instruction.

(continued on next page)

Sample Banner Question Worksheet continued

2. What have I heard about or observed that especially interests me?

I have heard about a backward planning model and several technology-enabled solutions that might help achieve my goal.

3. What would I like to do differently?

I am committed to having this be an involvement and not a compliance process.

4. What are my wants and needs for my professional life?

I want to find a way to have staff members see the goals of the school plan as a challenge and become comfortable with continual change and improvement and not feel threatened by new ideas. I have learned to accept the challenge of change in my professional and personal life and hope that I can find the tools and patience to facilitate that understanding among staff members.

Sample Professional Development Activities Log

Date	Activity
Done:	
10/00	*I read* Understanding by Design *by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe.*
10/00	*I observed my portfolio partner to watch interaction with staff.*
11/00	*I visited a school where staff members use a standards-based curriculum.*
2/01	*I read* Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self-Interest *by Peter Block.*
To do:	
2/01	*Build plan for establishing an action research project for performance assessments.*
3/01	*Attend Conference on Intelligent Behavior.*
4/01	*Attend Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) national conference.*
4/01	*Enroll in Leadership in the Future class at the university.*
5/01	*Participate in community planning project.*
5/01	*Attend State Administrator Association conference.*
5/01	*Read* Mapping the Big Picture: Integrating Curriculum and Assessment K–12.
5/01	*Read* Performance Assessment and Standards-based Curricula *by Allan A. Glatthorn.*

Sample Artifacts and Evidence Registry

This school leader collected data in response to the banner question "How can I enhance our district's capacity to build a standards-based curriculum and respond to accountability demands?"

Briefly list any artifact or evidence that causes reflection and prompts collaboration related to your banner question.

Student data from action research

Initial proposal from teacher's union for negotiations

Reflections from reading Stewardship

Model of a scale representing the delicacy of balance in work, in life

Copy of district standards for administrators

Standards for professional development from National Staff Development Council

Samples of curriculum backward planning using Understanding by Design

Design for assessing current state of grade-level curriculum and aligning with standards

Coaching models for building grade-level teams

Sample Outcomes of the Portfolio Process

Write your reflections on the portfolio process

Participating in the portfolio process has provided an opportunity to learn, reflect, and make important connections with other educational leaders both in and out of our system. I began this year with an extreme feeling of pressure regarding the charge of building a standards-based curriculum and linking it to performance assessment. I was determined to find a way to make this more than a task. I really wanted to see a shift in instruction and for the teachers to own and share this challenge. Participation in the roundtable gave me the energy and courage to try and do this the RIGHT way. I presented to the School Board the option for building a standards-based curriculum. We could produce a document that contains a neatly organized curriculum aligned to the standards, or we could engage the teachers in the process of designing a standards-based curriculum that assists us in striving to improve and drastically modify what and how we teach and assess..The second option has the potential to build teacher capacity for teaching to the standards. Producing a curriculum document does not assure a change in instruction. There is a greater likelihood that instruction will shift if teachers are engaged in the design process.

With the sponsorship in the school system and the support of the Board, we took the teacher-as-professional route. It is paying off. It has been a leadership challenge to focus on building capacity and commitment and letting go of the control and compliance. I have learned a great deal about myself and my need for feedback from others. The professional network we have established will continue to be an asset in my work. Collecting artifacts and evidence to share also helped me in pacing and focusing my work. Aiming for goals was important, but doing the work, with permission to adapt and facilitate the process with staff members, was where the bulk of my energy was spent. As a result of working through the portfolio process, I have come to realize the impact of isolation on my work as well as the verve that entered my work as I opened myself and my professional workspace to others.

(continued on next page)

Sample Outcomes of the Portfolio Process continued

What articulation, sharing, demonstrating, and exhibiting have you done regarding your portfolio?

I have shared my portfolio with members of my roundtable and with my portfolio partner. I also belong to a local administrator association where I have shared the model I developed for building a standards-based curriculum. These demonstrations have opened the door for new information and resources regarding the performance assessments, our next big challenge in the school system!

What new questions have emerged from your inquiry?

As a result of participation in the portfolio process, I am seeking new ways to define and describe professional development. I am asking questions about the evaluation of educators—teachers and administrators. What is the purpose and function of the evaluation process, and is it accomplishing that purpose in its current form?

How have your beliefs been challenged or changed?

The greatest challenge I have faced this year is finding the balance in my work and my life. I am continually perplexed about how we so often compromise or set aside our belief and our truth in the name of getting it done. That compliant mindset will not get us where we need to go with students. This belief is a constant with me, and the change might be that together we could accomplish a great deal.

What is a possible future banner question?

My banner question for next year will be part two of what I started this year. I will move on to extended implementation and connecting performance assessment and multiple sources of student data to the new, standards-based curriculum.

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Designing the School Leader's Portfolio

"In *Designing the School Leader's Portfolio,* Dietz has created a process and a framework that significantly improve the chances that administrators will learn within the context of leading."

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A professional portfolio is often used as a gauge to indicate a teacher's learning, growth, and effectiveness. Recently, the portfolio is also being considered as a useful tool for administrators. In *Designing the School Leader's Portfolio,* administrators learn how to develop their own professional portfolios to reflect growth and facilitate assessment.

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Mary E. Dietz

A nationally renowned consultant and author, Dietz specializes in assisting schools and organizations by facilitating major change as well as assessment processes that support continuous improvement. She helps teachers, administrators, school boards, and communities begin the collaboration process necessary to foster school improvement and professional growth. Widely published, Dietz is also the author of *Journals as Frameworks for Change.* She is founder of LearnCity.com, a Web-based company that provides instructional technology solutions for educators.

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